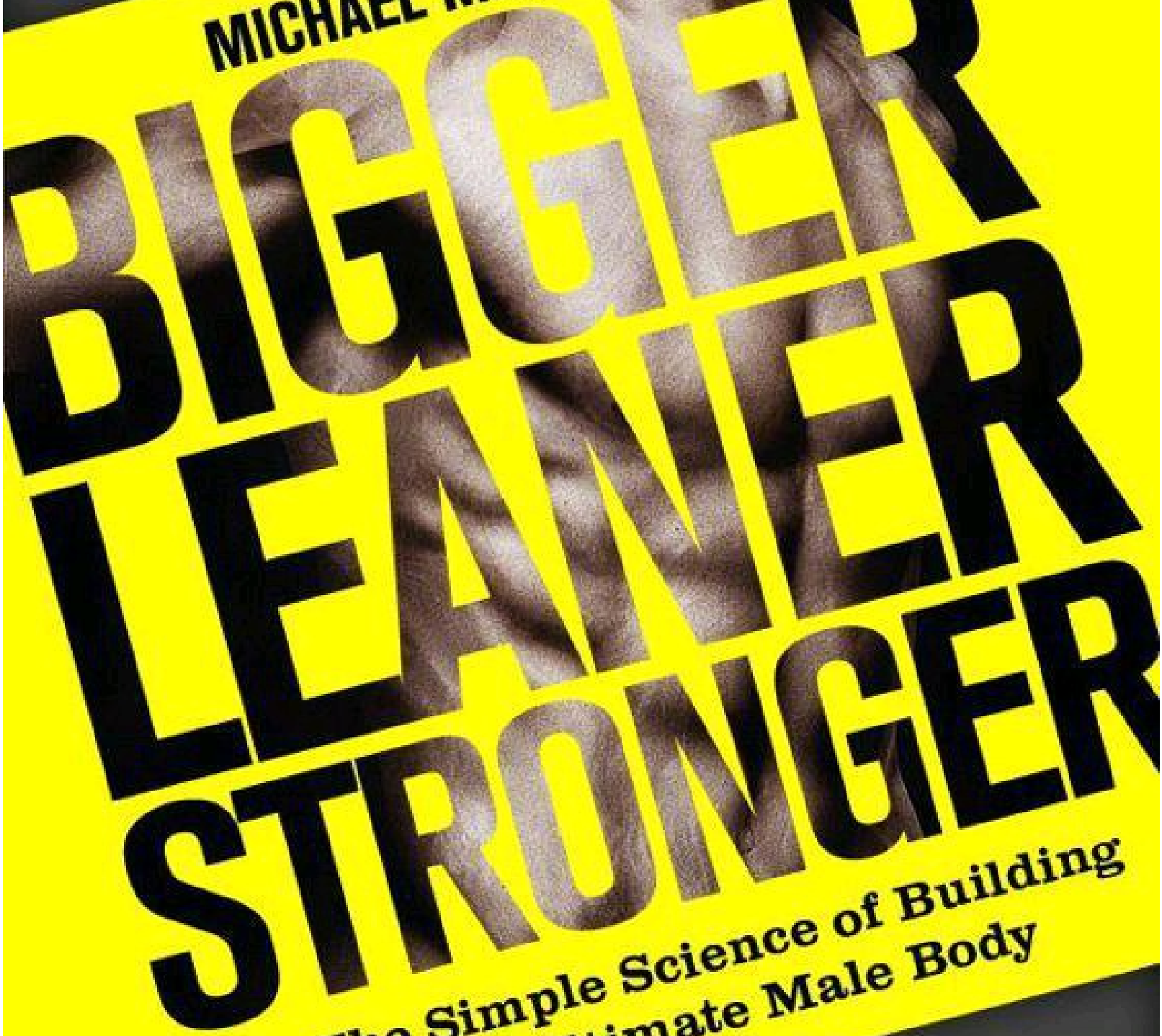
MICHAEL MATTHEWS

BIGGER LEANER STRONGER



The Simple Science of Building the Ultimate Male Body

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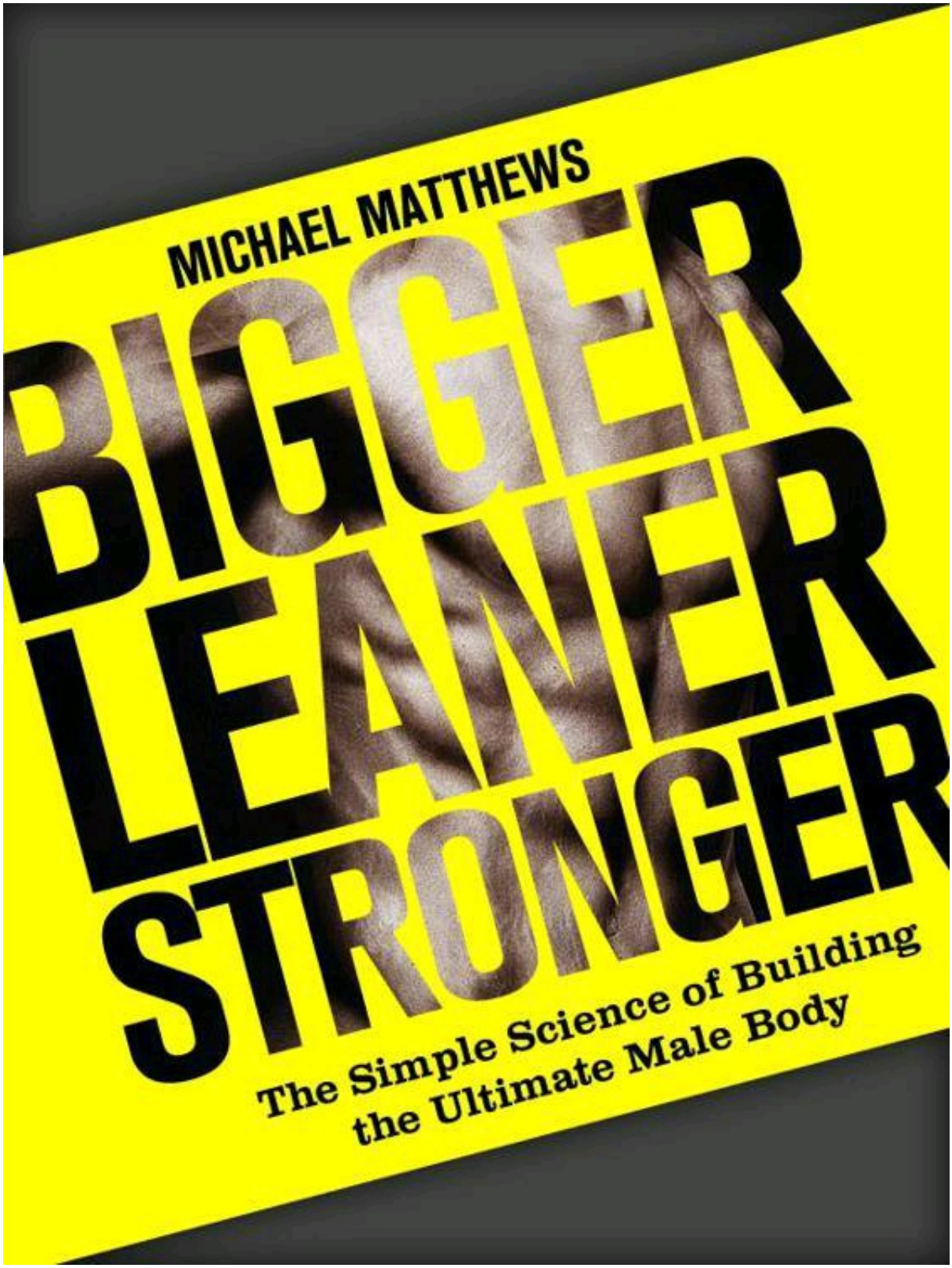
MICHAEL MATTHEWS
BIGGER
LEANER
STRONGER
The Simple Science of Building the Ultimate Male Body

BIGGER LEANER STRONGER

THE SIMPLE SCIENCE OF BUILDING THE ULTIMATE MALE BODY

Michael Matthews

This book is a general educational health-related information product and is intended for healthy adults, age 18 and over.

This book is solely for information and educational purposes and is not medical advice. Please consult a medical or health professional before you begin any exercise, nutrition, or supplementation program or if you have questions about your health.

There may be risks associated with participating in activities or using products mentioned in this book for people in poor health or with pre-existing physical or mental health conditions.

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www.buildhealthymuscle.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi, I'm Mike and I've been training for nearly a decade now.

I believe that every person can achieve the body of his or her dreams, and I work hard to give everyone that chance by providing workable, proven advice grounded in science, not a desire to sell phony magazines, workout products, or supplements.

Through my work, I've helped thousands of people achieve their health and fitness goals, and I share everything I know in my books.

So if you're looking to get in shape and look great, then I think I can help you. I hope you enjoy my books and I'd love to hear from you at my site,www.buildhealthymuscle.com.

Sincerely,

Mike

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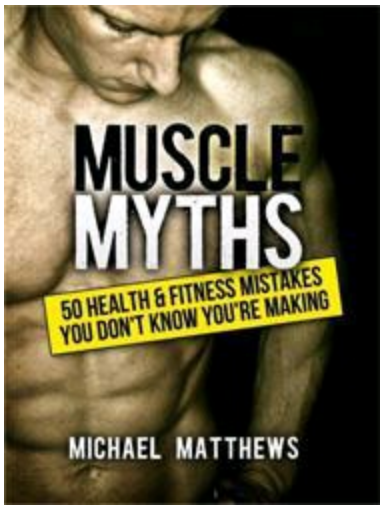
OTHER BOOKS BY MICHAEL MATTHEWS



Muscle Myths: 50 Health & Fitness Mistakes You Don't Know You're Making

If you've ever felt **lost in the sea of contradictory training and diet advice out there and you just want to know once and for all what works and what doesn't**—what's scientifically true and what's false—when it comes to building muscle and getting ripped, then you need to read this book.

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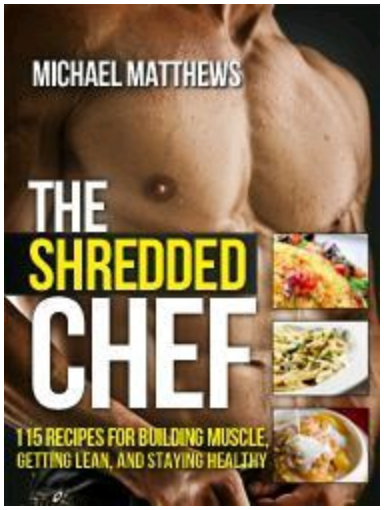

The Shredded Chef: 115 Recipes for Building Muscle, Getting Lean, and Staying Healthy

If you want to know how to **forever escape the dreadful experience of "dieting"** and learn how to cook **nutritious, delicious meals that make building muscle and burning fat easy and enjoyable**, then you need to read this book.

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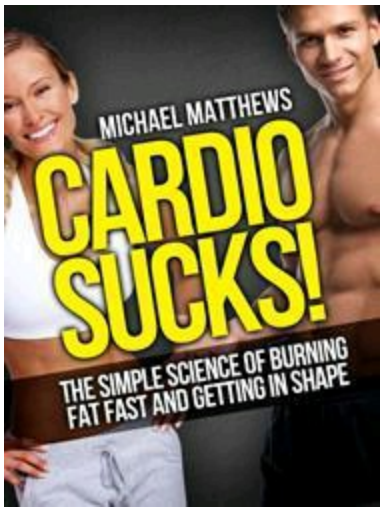

Cardio Sucks! The Simple Science of Burning Fat Fast and Getting in Shape

If you're short on time and sick of the same old boring cardio routine and want to **kick your fat loss into high gear by working out less and...heaven forbid...actually have some fun...**then you want to read this new book.

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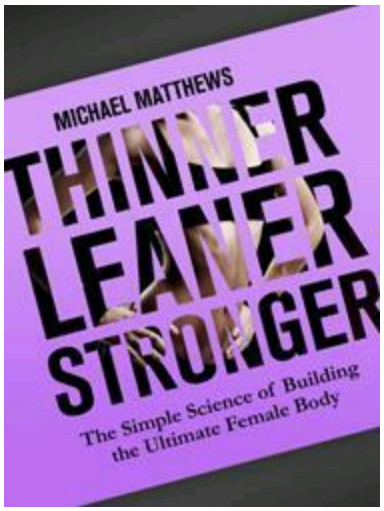

Thinner Leaner Stronger: The Simple Science of Building the Ultimate Female Body

If you want to be toned, lean, and strong as quickly as possible **without crash dieting, "good genetics," or wasting ridiculous amounts of time in the gym and money on supplements**...*regardless of your age*... then you want to read this book.

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The Year One Challenge:

Bigger, Leaner, and Stronger Than Ever in 12 Months

In this free 70-page bonus report, I'm going to share with you the brands of supplements and equipment I've come to love, and give you a detailed 12-month training plan that will ensure you get the most out my program.

WOULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR?

You’re awesome for reading my book, and I have a small favor to ask...

OTHER BOOKS BY MICHAEL MATTHEWS

More practical health and fitness advice to help you get into the best shape of your life.

THE PROMISE

No matter how bad you might think your genetics are, no matter how lost you might feel after trying and abandoning many types of workouts, you absolutely, positively can have the lean, ripped body that you dream about.

What if I could show you how to dramatically transform your body faster than you ever thought possible?

What if I gave you the exact formula of exercise and eating that makes putting on 10 – 15 pounds of *quality lean mass* a breeze...and it only takes 8 – 12 weeks?

What if I showed you how to get a lean, cut physique that you love (and that girls drool over) by investing *no more than 5 percent* of your time each day?

What if I told you that you can achieve that "Hollywood hunk" body without having your life revolve around it—no long hours in the gym, no starving yourself, and no grueling cardio that turns your stomach. I'll even show you how to get shredded while still indulging in the "cheat" foods that you love every week like pasta, pizza, and ice cream.

And what if I promised to be at your side the entire way, helping you avoid the scams, pitfalls, and problems that most guys fall into, helping you systematically achieve your true genetic potential, and basically doing everything I can to see you achieve the best body you've ever had?

Imagine if you got up every morning, looked in the mirror, and couldn't help but smile at your reflection. Imagine the boost in confidence you'd feel if you didn't have that belly fat anymore, or if you were no longer "that skinny guy" but instead had six-pack abs and were "that ripped guy."

Imagine, just 12 weeks from now, being constantly complimented on how you look and asked what the *heck* you're doing to make such startling gains. Imagine enjoying the added benefits of high energy levels, no aches and pains, better spirits, and knowing that you're getting healthier every day.

Well, you *can* have all of these things, and it's not nearly as complicated as the fitness industry wants you to believe (more on that in a minute). It doesn't matter if you're 21 or 61, in shape or completely not. No matter who you are, I promise you: you can change your body into whatever you desire.

So, would you like my help?

If you answered "Yes!" then you've taken a *leap*, not a step, toward your goals to become a leaner, more muscular you.

Your journey to the ultimate male body begins as soon as you turn to the next page.

INTRODUCTION

WHY *BIGGER LEANER STRONGER* IS DIFFERENT

I'm going to tell you something that the kings of the multi-billion dollar health and fitness industry don't want you to know: You don't need any of their crap to get ripped and to look better than you ever have before.

- You don't need to spend hundreds of dollars per month on the worthless supplements that steroid freaks shill in advertisements.

- You don't need to constantly change up your exercise routines to "confuse" your muscles. I'm pretty sure that muscles lack cognitive abilities, so this approach is a good way to just confuse you instead.

- You don't need to burn through buckets of protein powder every month, stuffing down enough protein each day to feed a third-world village.

- You don't need to toil away in the gym for a couple of hours per day doing tons of sets, supersets, drop sets, giant sets, etc. (As a matter of fact, this is a great way to stunt gains and get nowhere.)

- You don't need to grind out hours and hours of boring cardio to shed ugly belly fat and love handles and get a shredded six-pack. (How many flabby treadmillers have you come across over the years?)

- You don't need to completely abstain from "cheat" foods while getting down to single-digit body fat percentages. If you plan cheat meals correctly, you can actually speed your metabolism up and *accelerate* fat loss.

These are just a small sampling of the harmful fallacies commonly believed by many, and they will bury you in a rut of frustration that inevitably leads to you quitting because of little or no real results.

That was actually my motivation for creating *Bigger Leaner Stronger*: For many years now, I've had friends, family, acquaintances, and co-workers approach me for fitness advice, and they were almost always convinced of many strange, unworkable ideas about diet and exercise.

By educating them in the same way as I'm about to educate you, I've helped many people melt away fat, build lean, attractive muscle, and not only look great but *feel* great too. And, while helping friends, friends of friends, and family is fulfilling, I want to be able to help thousands (or tens or even hundreds of thousands!). Thus, *Bigger Leaner Stronger* was born.

Now, where did the many fitness and nutrition myths come from? Well, I don't want to waste your time with the boring history of the world of weightlifting, supplements, and information resources, but the long story short is simply this:

When people are willing to spend big amounts of money on certain types of products or to solve specific problems, there will never be a scarcity of new, "cutting edge" things for them to empty their wallets on, and there will always be scores of brilliant marketers inventing new schemes to keep people spending.

It's pretty simple, really. All we have to do is look where most people get their training and nutritional advice from. Almost everyone gets it from one or more of these three sources: magazines, personal trainers, or friends...and you'll almost never learn anything useful from any of them.

How can I make such bold claims, you wonder? Because I've seen it all, tried it all, and while I don't know it all, I *do* know what works and what doesn't.

Every Time You Read a Bodybuilding Magazine, You're Getting Slapped in the Face

Last time I looked, close to a dozen bodybuilding magazines were waiting on the shelves of Barnes and Noble, all shiny and ready to lure in victims like Venus flytraps. Simply put, every time you buy one of the big bodybuilding magazines, you're paying to be lied to.

Here's a fun fact that you probably didn't know: *MuscleMag, IronMan, Flex, Muscular Development, Muscle & Fitness, Muscle Media*, and the rest of the mainstream bodybuilding magazines are owned by supplement companies and are used simply as mouthpieces for their products. Yup. *MuscleMag* is controlled by *MuscleTech*; *IronMan* is controlled by *MuscleLink*; *Muscular Development* is Twinlab's shill piece; *Muscle & Fitness* and *Flex* are owned by Joe Weider and are thus promotion catalogues for his companies, such as Weider, Metaform, MuscleTribe, and several others; and *MuscleMedia* is the EAS cheerleader.

The primary goal of these magazines is to sell supplements for the companies controlling them, and they work *damn* well. The magazines push products in various ways. They have pretty advertisements all over the place, they regularly run "advertorials" (advertisements disguised as informative articles), and they balance the lot of sales pitches with some actual articles that provide workout and nutrition advice (which also, in many cases, end with product recommendations of some kind).

So, this is the first blow that magazines deal to you: They give you a lot of "advice" that is geared first and foremost to selling you products, not helping you achieve your goals.

The supplement companies know that if they can just keep getting these magazines into people's hands, they will keep selling products. So, how do they ensure that you will keep buying? By coming up with a constant flow of new advice and ideas, of course.

And this is the second, probably more harmful, blow: They inundate you with all kinds of false ideas about what it takes to get into great shape. If they told the simple truth every month, they would

have maybe 20 articles or so that they could re-print over and over. Instead, they get quite creative with all kinds of sophisticated (but useless) workout routines, "tricks," and diets (that include certain supplements to really MAXIMIZE the effectiveness, of course).

The bottom line is that you can't trust these types of magazines. They are all either owned by or financially dependent upon supplement companies, and what I outlined above *is* the game they play.

Most Personal Trainers Are Just a Waste of Money...End of Story

Most personal trainers are a waste of time and money.

Every week I see trainers who either have no clue what they're doing or who just don't care about their clients. These poor people are paying $50-75 per hour to do silly, ineffective workout routines that usually consist of the wrong exercises done with bad form (and they make little or no gains).

And, let's not forget that most personal trainers aren't even in good shape themselves, which always confuses me. How can you honestly sell yourself as a fitness expert when you're flabby and out of shape? Who could possibly believe you? Well, for some reason, these types of trainers get business all the time, and their clients almost always stay flabby and out of shape themselves.

To compound the disservice, most trainers don't even bother giving their clients nutritional plans, which *really* ensures lackluster gains. The fact is that 70-80% of how you look is a reflection of how you eat. Fat, skinny, ripped, whatever—working out is only 20-30% of the equation. Eat wrong, and you will stay fat no matter how much cardio you do; eat wrong, and you will stay skinny and weak no matter how much you struggle with weights. Eat right, however, and you can unlock the maximum potential gains from working out: rapid, long-term fat loss and muscle gains that will turn heads and get your friends and family talking.

You might be wondering why these trainers know so little as certified professionals. Well, I have several good friends who are trainers, and they've all told me the same thing, which is that passing the certification test does *not* make you an expert—it means that you can memorize some basic information about nutrition, anatomy, and exercise...that's about it.

While some people are happy to pay a trainer just to force themselves to show up every day, trainers are usually in a similar boat as the magazines. They have to constantly justify their existence, and they do it by changing up routines and talking about "sophisticated" workout principles (that they read about in the magazines)...and when it's all said and done, their clients waste thousands of dollars to make poor gains.

That being said, there absolutely *are* great trainers out there who are in awesome shape themselves, who *do* know how to quickly and effectively get others into shape, and who do really care. If you're one of them and you're reading this book, I applaud you because you're carrying the weight of the entire profession on your shoulders.

Bigger Leaner Stronger is Different

I don't know about you, but I don't train to have fun or hang out with the guys—I train to look and feel better, and I want to get the most from my efforts. If I can get better results by working out half as long as the other guy, that's what I want to do. If I were new to weightlifting and my options were to gain ten pounds in a month by doing the same exercises every week (done with correct form, intensity, and weight progression) or to squeak out two pounds by doing the latest dynamic inertia muscle confusion routine, I'd choose the former.

Bigger Leaner Stronger is all about training and getting results. It gives you a precise training and eating regimen that delivers maximum gains in the least amount of time. The exercises are nothing new and sophisticated, but you've probably never approached them like how I'm going to teach you. There's nothing cutting-edge or complicated about how to eat correctly, but most people have it all wrong.

With *Bigger Leaner Stronger*, you can gain 10 – 15 pounds of muscle in your first three months of lifting weights. That's a pretty drastic change. People are going to start asking you for workout advice. Even if you're not a beginning lifter, you can gain one pound of lean mass per week, every week, until you're happy with your size.

If your goal is to simply lose fat, I'm going to show you how to lose 1 – 2 pounds of fat per week like clockwork (and how to keep it off, too).

So, are you ready?

Here's the first step: *Forget what you think you know about working out*. I know, it might sound a little harsh, but trust me—it's for your own good. Just let it all go, approaching *Bigger Leaner Stronger* with an open mind. Along the way, you'll find that certain things you believed or did were right while others were wrong, and that's okay. Just follow the program exactly as I lay it out, and then let the results speak for themselves. If you do, you won't go looking for another training program for a long time, if ever again.

So, let's get started!

1

THE HIDDEN BARRIER TO ACHIEVING YOUR FITNESS AND HEALTH GOALS

You may have wondered why so many people are utterly confused on the subjects of health and fitness. Ask around one day, and you're liable to receive all kinds of conflicting, illogical advice and opinions.

Counting calories doesn't work. Broccoli has more protein than chicken. The body can't assimilate carbohydrates after 6 PM, so eat all the pasta you want at night. If you eat fats, you'll gain fat (and its corollary: eat little-to-no fat to lose fat). Your body can do just fine on one meal per day.

I've actually been told all of these things. Pretty scary, right?

So how does this happen? Why are people so susceptible to false information, lies, and weird ideas?

While that question might sound like it has a deep, philosophical answer, it's pretty simple, really.

The next time you hear someone saying that counting calories isn't necessary or doesn't work, ask them this simple question:

What *is* a calorie?

One for one, they will just stand there with a confused look on their faces. They don't have a clue what the word means. And that's only the beginning, of course.

What is a carbohydrate?

What is protein?

What is fat?

What is muscle?

What is a hormone?

What is a vitamin?

What is an amino acid?

Very few people can actually define these words, so of course they can't understand the subject

and will believe nearly anything they're told. How can you gain a full and proper understanding of a subject when you don't understand the words used to explain it?

Well, that's why *words* are the biggest hidden barrier to understanding that almost everyone completely overlooks.

Simply put, if you have misunderstandings about the words being used to communicate specific concepts, you will not duplicate the communications exactly—you will reach your own distorted conclusions due to misinterpretation. If I were to tell you, "The children have to leave at crepuscule," you might wonder what I am talking about. "Crepuscule" simply means the time of the day when the sun is just below the horizon, especially the period between sunset and dark. The sentence now makes sense, doesn't it?

In school, many of us were taught to simply guess at the meanings of words by looking at the surrounding context or by comparing the word to other words in our vocabularies. This is, of course, a very unreliable method of study because the person writing the text had a specific concept to communicate and chose exact words based on specific understandings. If you want to receive the information in the same light, you must share the same understanding of the words used to convey it, not come to subjective understandings based on what you think the words might mean.

With "crepescule" in the example above, context only reveals that the word must be a time of day, which isn't enough information to guess the word. Then, you're left with looking at the word itself, maybe thinking, "Well, 'crepescule' looks like 'crepes,' which are often eaten in the morning, so I guess it means 'after breakfast?'"

That's why the first part of *Bigger Leaner Stronger* is clarifying the key words that will be used throughout the book. I know that reading the definitions of words is kind of dry and unsexy, but trust me, it will help a lot. It's the only way you can be sure that we're on the same page and that you're understanding things the way I mean you to.

I took care in putting together these key word lists to build your understanding from the simple to the more complex, and I think you'll find the learning curve very mild. I'm sure you will breeze right through it and have quite a few light bulbs turn on.

By the end of the next few chapters of this book, you will know more about health, nutrition, and fitness than most everyone you know. It's really that bad out there.

So let's get started with the first list of key words.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND FITNESS

PART ONE: SCIENCE OF THE BODY

ENERGY: 1. *Energy* is the power received from electricity, fuel, food, and other sources in order to work or produce motion.

Examples: A power plant produces energy for the whole town. A car gets energy by burning fuel.

2. Energy is the physical or mental strength of a person that can be directed toward some activity.

Example: He did not have enough energy to do housework after a long day at work.

CHEMISTRY: Chemistry is the branch of science that deals with the identification of the substances that matter is composed of, the study of their characteristics, and the ways that they interact, combine, and change.

CHEMICAL: 1. Chemical means having to do with chemistry, or how substances are made up and the reactions and changes they go through.

Example: The liquids in the laboratory containers were undergoing chemical reactions.

2. A *chemical* is any substance that can undergo a chemical process or change.

Examples: There are many naturally occurring chemicals in your body, such as saliva, which interacts with food to cause a chemical reaction and break it down. Even a simple substance like water is a chemical because it can cause chemical reactions when combined with other substances.

Note: Usually when people say chemicals, they are referring to man-made substances, but the definition isn't limited to just this.

ORGANISM: An organism is a single living thing, such as a person, animal, or plant.

CELL: A cell is the basic unit of all living organisms. Some living organisms exist only as a single cell. An average-size man contains 60 to 100 trillion cells. Cells keep themselves alive, produce energy, exchange information with neighboring cells, multiply, and eventually die when their time has come. Each cell is a small container of chemicals and water wrapped up by a thin sheet of material.

TISSUE: Tissue is body material in animals and plants that's made up of large numbers of cells that are similar in form and function.

MUSCLE: Muscles are masses of tissue in the body, often attached to bones that can tighten and relax to produce movement.

FAT: 1. Fat is naturally oily or greasy extra flesh in the body kept under the skin.

Example: He had so much fat that his stomach was hanging over his beltline.

2. Fat is a substance of this type made from plant products that's used in cooking. Some fats are important nutrients for the body to use in building cells and accomplishing other bodily activities.

Example: Butter and olive oil are fats.

ORGAN: An organ is a part of an organism that's made of a group of two or more tissues that work together to achieve a specific function.

Example: Your lungs, heart, stomach, and brain are all major organs. Your eyes and ears are sense organs, and skin is the largest organ.

Note: Muscle is not an organ because a muscle is just one kind of tissue, and an organ must consist of at least two kinds of tissue to be considered an organ.

GRAM: A gram is a unit of weight in the metric system. One pound is about 454 grams.

Example: A football is about 400 grams.

KILOGRAM: A kilogram is equal to a thousand grams. There are a little more than two pounds to every kilogram.

MILLIGRAM: A milligram is one thousandth of a gram. There are one thousand milligrams in a gram.

Example: A football weighs 40,000 milligrams.

CELSIUS: Celsius is a scale of temperature on which water freezes at 0 degrees and boils at 100 degrees.

Note: In the Fahrenheit scale used in the U.S., water freezes at 32 degrees and boils at 212 degrees.

CALORIE: A calorie is a measurement unit of the amount of energy that can be produced by food. One calorie is enough energy to raise the temperature of one kilogram of water by one degree Celsius.

Thus, when you're referring to the calories contained in food, you're referring to the potential

energy stored in the food.

Note: Extra calories taken into the body beyond what is needed to run the body or build muscle can be stored as fat.

NUTRIENT: A nutrient is a substance that gives a living body something that it needs to live and grow.

Example: Water, fruits, vegetables, and meats all contain nutrients.

FOOD: Food is material taken into the body to provide it with the nutrients it needs for energy and growth. Food is fuel for the body.

MATTER: Matter is any material in the universe that has mass and size.

Example: Earth is composed of matter. Plastic is a kind of matter. Fruits and vegetable are matter that you can eat.

ELEMENT: An element (also called a chemical element) is a substance that cannot be broken down into smaller parts by a chemical reaction. There are over 100 elements, which are detailed on the periodic table, and they are the primary building blocks of matter.

Examples: Oxygen and helium are elements.

COMPOUND: A compound is a substance made up of two or more different elements.

Example: Water is a compound made up of the combined elements of oxygen and hydrogen.

BREAK DOWN: To break something down means to separate it into smaller, more basic parts.

Example: Waste that is left out for long enough will break down eventually and become soil.

MOLECULE: A molecule is the smallest particle of any compound that still exists as that substance. If you were to break it down any further, it would separate into the elements that make it up (meaning it would no longer exist as that original substance).

Example: Molecules make up cells, which in turn make up the body. The individual molecules of a substance are so small that they can only be seen through a powerful microscope.

ACID: An acid is a chemical compound that usually eats away at materials and often tastes sour.

PROTEIN: Proteins are naturally occurring compounds that are used for growth and repair in the body and to build cells and tissues. Muscle tissue contains lots of protein. Protein keeps you strong and makes your bones last. It is an essential nutrient for life.

AMINO ACID: Amino acids are very small units of material that protein is built out of.

GAS: A gas is a substance that is in an air-like form (not solid or liquid).

Example: Oxygen, helium, and propane are gases at room temperature.

CARBON: Carbon is a common non-metallic chemical element that is found in much of the matter on earth and in all life.

Example: Coal is mainly made up of carbon as well as ashes that are left after matter is burned. Motor oil, plants, and animals (including humans!) all contain carbon.

OXYGEN: Oxygen is a chemical element that is a gas with no color or smell and is necessary for most living things to survive.

HYDROGEN: Hydrogen is a colorless, odorless gas that is very flammable and is the simplest and most abundant chemical element in the universe.

Example: Water is actually a compound of oxygen and hydrogen. When two units of hydrogen combine with one unit of oxygen, water is formed either as ice (solid), liquid, or steam (gas). That's why water is known as H2O—two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen.

CARBOHYDRATE: Carbohydrates are chemical elements composed of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen. Carbohydrates are important nutrients for energy and for building cells in the body. The word carbohydrate is formed by carbo- which means carbon, and –hydrate which means water. It is an essential nutrient for life.

Example: Broccoli, lettuce, apples, bananas, bread, cereal, and sugar are all carbohydrates.

DIGESTION: Digestion is the process of breaking down food so that is can be absorbed and used by the body.

ENZYME: An enzyme is a substance produced by organisms that helps cause specific chemical reactions.

Example: Certain digestive enzymes help to break down food.

METABOLISM: Metabolism is the term for the series of processes by which molecules from food are broken down to release energy, which is then used to fuel the cells in the body and to create more complex molecules used for building new cells. Metabolism is necessary for life and is how the body creates and maintains the cells that make it up.

Note: When the body becomes hungry, one's metabolism slows down and less energy is released. The longer someone waits between meals, the slower their metabolism goes.

ANABOLISM: Anabolism is a metabolic process in which energy is used to make more complex substances (such as tissue) from simpler ones.

CATABOLISM: Catabolism is the production of energy through the conversion of complex molecules (such as muscle or fat) into simpler ones.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND FITNESS

PART TWO: NUTRITION

HEALTH: 1. A person's health is the general condition of his/her body or mind, especially in regards to strength and energy as well as the presence or lack of disease.

Example: He is in good health, but his sister has bad health.

2. Health is the state of being well; free of any illnesses or injuries.

Example: He was eating well and following the doctor's advice so that he could keep his health as he got older.

HEALTHY: Being healthy means that you are in a good condition physically with good strength and energy levels and free from illness or damage.

NOURISH: To nourish is to provide something with the substances needed to grow, live, and be healthy.

Example: The body needs to be nourished with good food and plenty of rest.

NUTRIENT: A nutrient is a substance that provides nourishment essential for life and growth.

Example: Proteins are nutrients and are essential for life and growth.

NUTRITION: Nutrition is the process of getting nourishment, especially the process of getting food and nutrients and utilizing them to stay healthy, grow, and build and replace tissues.

DIET: 1. One's diet is the food and drink that he or she usually consumes.

Example: He never had time to cook, so his diet consisted mainly of pizza and Chinese take-out.

2. A diet is a special course of controlled or restricted intake of food or drink for a particular purpose, such as losing weight, supporting exercise, or for medical maintenance.

Example: She already lost 15 pounds with her new diet.

SUGAR: Sugar is a class of sweet-tasting carbohydrates that come from various plants, fruits, honey, and other sources.

SUCROSE: Sucrose is the kind of sugar most commonly called "table sugar." It is usually in the form of a white powder and is used as a sweetener. It is most often taken from natural sources but can be made artificially as well.

GLUCOSE: Glucose is a very simple sugar that is an important energy source in living things. Most carbohydrates are broken down in the body into glucose, which is the main source of fuel for all cells.

GLYCOGEN: Glycogen is a substance found in bodily tissues that acts as a store of carbohydrates.

Note: When the body has extra glucose, it stores it in the liver and muscles, and this stored form of glucose is called glycogen. Glycogen is like the body's back-up fuel, and it releases glucose into the bloodstream when the body needs a quick energy boost. It doesn't matter whether you eat lettuce or candy; both end up as glucose in the body. The only difference is that the lettuce takes a lot longer to break down into glucose than the sugary candy. (The different effects of each will be described in detail in Chapter 17.)

BLOOD SUGAR: Your blood sugar level is the amount of glucose in your blood. Glucose is carried in the blood and delivered to cells so that it can be broken down and the energy can be stored or used.

SIMPLE CARBOHYDRATE: A simple carbohydrate is a very simple form of sugar that is usually sweet tasting and is broken down into glucose very quickly.

Example: Some foods that are high in simple carbohydrates are candy, white bread, dairy products, most pasta, and certain fruits.

COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATE: A complex carbohydrate is a carbohydrate that is made up of many molecules of "simple carbohydrates" linked together. Because of this, it takes the body longer to break it down into glucose.

Example: Some foods that are high in complex carbohydrates are bananas, lettuce, tomatoes, oatmeal, brown rice, and beans.

STARCH: Starch is a complex carbohydrate that is found naturally in many fruits and vegetables and is sometimes added to other foods to thicken them. In its pure form it is a white powder. Starch is an important source of energy for the body. Although starch is a complex carbohydrate, some particular foods high in starch break down into glucose quickly, like a simple carbohydrate would.

Example: Potatoes, corn, and bread all contain starch.

HORMONE: A hormone is a chemical made in the body that gets transported by the blood or other bodily fluids to cells and organs to cause some action or to have a specific effect.

Example: Adrenaline is a hormone that is released during times of high stress or excitement that opens up the blood stream and boosts the supply of glucose and oxygen for more energy and strong, swift action.

INSULIN: Insulin is a hormone that consists of protein and is made in the organ known as the pancreas. When someone eats food, the carbohydrates are broken down into glucose, which is then absorbed into the bloodstream to be delivered to the body's cells. When this happens, the body detects the change in blood sugar and releases insulin, which causes muscles, organs, and fat tissue to take up the glucose and either use it or store it as energy. It also causes cells to take up amino acids and build muscles.

Note: When insulin is released, the body does not use its stored fat to get energy; it only gets energy from the food that is being digested. When a person eats foods containing lots of simple carbohydrates, high amounts of insulin are released into the blood. The carbohydrates get broken down and are either used or stored as fat and glycogen very quickly, giving a boost in energy. Because all of the glucose gets broken down and stored quickly, however, the energy boost runs out very fast, and the person experiences the "crash" that comes after a sugar high.

If this is repeated on a regular basis, the insulin keeps being produced and released into the bloodstream in high amounts, bringing too much glucose to the tissues in the body. These tissues will eventually start resisting this and will refuse to accept the insulin. The extra sugar in the blood that cannot be utilized now can cause damage to the blood circulation system and ends up being stored as fat. Since the insulin is no longer helping the cells absorb glucose properly, the body is left feeling hungry, causing the person to eat even more. As this continues over a long period of time, the pancreas can get exhausted and stop producing enough insulin, causing the cells to become starved for glucose and die. (see also diabetes)

INDEX: An index is a system of listing information in an order that allows one to easily compare it to other information.

Example: He put together an index to compare prices from different companies.

GLYCEMIC INDEX: The glycemic index (or GI) is a scale that measures the effect of different carbohydrates on one's blood sugar level. Carbohydrates that break down slowly and release glucose into the blood slowly are low on the glycemic index. Carbohydrates that break down quickly will release glucose into the blood quickly, causing insulin levels to suddenly spike; these are high on the glycemic index. Below 55 on the GI is considered low, and above 70 is considered high. Pure glucose is 100 on the GI.

GRAIN: Grains are seeds of different kinds of grass that are used for many kinds of food. Grains are often ground up into a powder called flour.

Example: Wheat, oats, barley, rice, and corn are all grains.

WHEAT: Wheat is a plant that produces grain. It's commonly used for making bread and pasta.

WHITE BREAD: White bread is bread made from wheat flour that has had parts of the grains removed and has been bleached in order for it to bake easier and last longer.

Note: Most of the nutrients are removed or killed in the process of making white bread, turning the bread into a simpler carbohydrate.

WHOLE GRAIN: Foods containing grains that have not had parts removed are called whole grain foods. Whole grain bread is a source of complex carbohydrates, oils, fats, and some protein.

FIBER: Fiber is a substance found in some grains, fruit, and vegetables that cannot be digested. Fiber serves to soak up extra water and push other food through the digestive system. It helps push useless food waste out of the body, preventing it from sitting in the system and clogging it. Fiber is considered to play a role in the prevention of many diseases of the digestive tract.

Example: Some foods containing fiber are bread, beans, bananas, onions, oats, and broccoli.

FATTY ACIDS : Fatty acids are the molecules that make up fat cells. Some fatty acids are needed for building parts of cells and tissues in the body. Fatty acids contain twice as many calories as carbohydrates and proteins and are mainly used to store energy in fat tissue.

Example: Fatty acids can be found in animal fat from meat, such as beef or pork, or in oils from plants, such as olive oil.

OIL: Oil is fat that is in a liquid form at room temperature. Oil has a slippery feeling and does not mix well with water.

Examples: Olive oil, vegetable oil, and peanut oil are types of edible oils.

ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS: Some fatty acids are called essential fatty acids because they are needed for many important bodily functions. They are received from the oils of some plants and fish.

Example: Avocados, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, and sesame seeds are high in essential fatty acids.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND FITNESS

PART THREE: HEALTH

SUPPLEMENT: A supplement is a quantity of any substance that's added to fill in a deficiency or make something more complete.

DIETARY SUPPLEMENT : A dietary (or nutritional) supplement is a product taken to give a person nutrients that are not contained in a large enough quantity in the person's diet.

Example: Oils, amino acids, herbs, and digestive enzymes are sometimes taken as dietary supplements.

VITAMIN: A vitamin is a naturally occurring compound that is needed in small amounts by the body but cannot be produced in the body, and therefore, it needs to be absorbed from an outside source. Not getting enough vitamins in your diet leads to many undesirable conditions and possibly fatal diseases.

Example: Vitamins can be received from foods like eggs, liver, oil from fish, some fruits and vegetables, and others. Vitamins are also sold by themselves as a dietary supplement in little tablets.

MINERAL: A mineral is a compound that is found in non-living matter. They are not naturally created inside of living organisms, but they are required by the body to maintain proper function.

Example: Salt, calcium, iron, and aluminum are all minerals. Minerals can be taken in tablet form as a dietary supplement.

DEHYDRATION: The human body is made of 75% water. Water is lost by sweating, urination, and breathing, and this water needs to be replaced every day. When not enough water has been replaced for the body to properly function, it is called dehydration. This gives you a headache, makes you tired and weak, and if not fixed, can be fatal since all vital organs need water to exist and function.

NERVE: A nerve is a bundle of fibers in the body that carries electrical messages between the brain, spinal cord, organs, and muscles. These messages give sensations and cause muscles and organs to operate. Nerves are the communication system of the body.

Example: The orders from the brain to make the fingers move were transmitted through the nerves.

SALT: Salt is a mineral that is used a lot in cooking for seasoning food. It has its own taste that is one of the basic tastes of the human diet. Salt is a very important electrolyte and mineral that is necessary for many bodily functions.

PROCESSED: To process food means to use chemicals or a machine to change or preserve the food.

Note: The action of processing foods done by food manufacturers often kills many of the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that the body needs, and it typically adds chemicals into the food that are harmful to the body. Processed food usually has many more calories than it would otherwise have, but without the nutrients that usually go along with it. The calories from this food are more likely to be stored as fat instead of being used for building cells and muscle tissue, or for fueling vital body functions. People call these "empty calories."

ORGANIC: Organic food is food that has been raised and made with very little or no use of artificially made chemical pesticides and fertilizers, according to a standard now regulated by the government. With the current standards in the U.S., foods that have ingredients that are at least 95% organic and that have been prepared with very low or no artificial chemicals added or used in processing can be sold with the label organic.

ALL NATURAL: Natural foods are foods that have gone through very little or no processing. Some people like to eat all natural foods to avoid artificial, added chemicals and "empty calories."

Note: All natural foods have not been heavily processed, but that does not mean that they are organic. All natural labels can be used more freely and are not as strictly regulated as organic foods. All natural foods have usually had chemical fertilizers and pesticides used on them unless they are also marked as organic.

CHOLESTEROL: Cholesterol is a soft, waxy substance found among some fats that moves through your bloodstream and into your body's cells. Your body makes some cholesterol, and the rest comes from animal products consumed, such as meat, fish, eggs, butter, cheese, and whole milk. Cholesterol is not found in foods made from plants.

Note: One kind of cholesterol, known as "*good cholesterol*," is necessary for survival and is used in building the cells in the body and for other important functions. "*Bad cholesterol*" can get stuck in your bloodstream and block the flow of blood, causing a heart-attack if you have too much of it in the bloodstream.

SATURATED FAT : Saturated fat is a kind a fat found in some foods that tends to increase the amount of bad cholesterol in the blood.

Example: Saturated fats can be found in butter, bacon, beef, and egg yolks.

UNSATURATED FAT: Unsaturated fat is a kind of fat found in food that does not raise levels of bad cholesterol, and it actually seems to lower the levels of cholesterol in the blood. It is also necessary for building cells and other body functions. Though it does have these healthy qualities, it is

still a fat and has high calories, so if eaten in a large amounts, it will still make a person gain fat tissue.

Example: Unsaturated fats can be found in fish oils, oils from nuts, and some vegetable oils.

TRANS FAT: Trans fat is fat that has been altered by a man-made process used to make the fat re-usable for frying things and to make foods last longer on the shelf. Trans fats have been shown to raise the level of bad cholesterol and lower the level of good cholesterol as well as lead to heart disease and some other severe diseases.

Example: Trans fats can but found in many foods, especially in fried foods like French fries and donuts as well as store-bought pastries, pizza dough, cookies, and crackers.

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI): The Body Mass Index (BMI) is a scale that uses a system of numbers for estimating about how much a person should weigh depending on how tall he or she is. The BMI is meant to give a vague estimate for large groups of people or whole populations. When the BMI is used for evaluating an individual, it is very often inaccurate because of different body types, like having a thin frame, a lot of muscle tissue, or being very tall.

Example: Using the BMI number system, below 18.5 is underweight, 18.5 to 25 is normal, and above 25 is overweight.

PERCENTAGE: A percent, or percentage, is a way of expressing a number as a fraction of 100. Percent means “for every hundred,” So 50% means half because 50 is half of 100.

BODY FAT PERCENTAGE : Your body fat percentage is a measurement of the amount of fat that you have in your body expressed as a percentage of your total body weight. This is a more precise measurement of fat than the BMI as it directly measures the person’s fat no matter what that person’s body type is or how much weight in muscle that person has, which are not taken into account on the BMI.

Note: The amount of fat your body needs to accomplish basic body functions for living is about 2-4% body fat in men and 10-12% in women.

OVERWEIGHT: Being overweight means that a person has more fat than is considered to be healthy.

OBESE: Someone who is obese has so much extra fat that it is extremely likely to have bad effects on that person’s health and can lead to many diseases. Being obese is determined by being over 30 on the BMI, or by having more than 32% body fat in women, and 25% in men.

THE 6 BIGGEST MUSCLE BUILDING MYTHS & MISTAKES

Nine out of ten guys you see in the gym don't train correctly. In many cases, I wouldn't even bother getting out of bed in the morning to do their training routines.

They're usually following programs they found in magazines or on the internet, or maybe they got them from friends or trainers. They are stuck in a rut of no gains or eking out slow, stubborn gains.

Most guys also compound their training mistakes by eating incorrectly—they're eating too much, eating too little, eating on a bad schedule, not getting the right amounts and types of macronutrients, and are making other various muscle-robbing mistakes. Eating for maximum muscle gain or fat loss means little more than meeting precise nutritional requirements on a precise schedule (and there's nothing *hard* about doing it—it just requires *exactness*).

So, I'd like to take a moment here to address the six most common myths and mistakes of building lean muscle, because chances are good that you have fallen victim to one or more of them at some point in the past (and if you haven't, it's probably because you're brand new, which actually gives you a great advantage: You get to do it right from day one!).

MYTH & MISTAKE #1:

<u>More Sets = More Growth</u>

I don't know about you, but I hate long workouts. Who wants to spend two hours in a gym every day? Only the over-zealous newbies who think that the grueling seventeenth set is where the growth occurs, or the obsessed 'roid-heads who like to squat until their noses bleed and deadlift until they puke (yes, these guys are out there).

The fact is, too many sets can actually lead to *overtraining*, which not only robs you of muscle growth and makes you feel run-down and lethargic, but can actually cause you to lose muscle. Yes, that's right—two hours of intense lifting can actually make you shrink and get weaker. You are simply breaking down the muscle too much for your body to repair optimally. Of course you don't want to under-train either by doing too little, which is why *Bigger Leaner Stronger* weight workouts are built to achieve the maximum muscle overload and stimulation that your body can efficiently repair.

More sets also means more time spent working out, of course, and this too can become detrimental. As you exercise, your body releases hormones such as testosterone, growth hormone, and insulin, all conducive to muscle growth. In response to the physical stress, however, your body also releases a hormone called *cortisol*. This hormone helps increase blood sugar levels and fight inflammation, but it also interferes with your body's ability to use protein correctly and stops muscle growth. One of the best ways to control cortisol is to *keep your training sessions short*.

Scientific studies, such as the one done by the University of Natal, have shown that weight training sessions between 45 – 60 minutes allow for proper muscle stimulation while maximizing testosterone production and minimizing cortisol production. Cardio sessions between 30 – 45 minutes were found to be the best for the same reasons. Post-workout nutrition is a huge part of managing cortisol too, but we'll get to that later.

The bottom line is that if your lifting program is built correctly, you can achieve stunning muscle gains by weight training for no longer than 45 – 60 minutes per day.

MYTH & MISTAKE #2:

You Have to "Feel the Burn" to Grow

How many times have you heard training partners yelling for each other to "Make it burn!" and "Get another three reps!"? They think that pumping out reps until the stinging pain is unbearable causes maximum growth. "No pain, no gain," right? Wrong. This is probably one of the worst fallacies out there. Muscle "burn" and pump are *not* paramount in achieving muscle growth.

When your muscles are burning, what you're actually feeling is a buildup of lactic acid in the muscle, which builds as you contract your muscles again and again. Lactic acid does trigger what's known as the "anabolic cascade," which is a cocktail of growth-inducing hormones, but when lactic acid levels become too elevated, studies have shown that it actually impairs growth and causes tissues to be broken down.

So, for yet another reason, when guys spend a couple of hours in the gym pounding away with drop sets, burnout sets, supersets, and so forth, they're doing much more harm than good.

So what *does* cause maximum muscle growth, then? The short answer is overload, which we'll go over in more detail soon.

MYTH & MISTAKE #3:

Wasting Time with the Wrong Exercises

In case you didn't know, most of what your gym has to offer in terms of workout machines and contraptions is worthless. Why? Because they just don't stimulate the muscles like free weights do. (*Free weights*, by the way, are objects like dumbbells, barbells, adjustable pulleys, and lat pull-down setups that can be moved in three-dimensional space.)

There's something oddly effective about forcing the body to freely manipulate weight, unaided, against the pull of gravity. Nobody ever built a great chest by just pounding away on the Pec Deck and Machine Press—they used barbells and dumbbells.

More specifically, the most effective muscle-building exercises are known as *compound exercises*. They're called compound exercises because they involve multiple muscle groups. Examples of compound exercises are the Squat, Deadlift, and Bench Press. The opposite of a

compound exercise is an *isolation exercise*, which involves one muscle group only. Examples of isolation exercises are the Cable Flye, Dumbbell Curl, and Leg Extension.

Numerous scientific studies have confirmed the benefits of compound exercises over isolation exercises. One such study was conducted at Ball State University in 2000, and it went like this:

Two groups of men trained with weights for ten weeks. Group one did four compound upper-body exercises, while group two did the same plus bicep curls and triceps extensions (isolation exercises).

After the training period, both groups increased strength and size, but which do you think had bigger arms? The answer is neither. The additional isolation training performed by group two produced no additional effect on arm strength or circumference. The takeaway is that by overloading your entire system, you cause everything to grow.

Charles Poliquin, trainer to world-class athletes like Olympians and professional sports players, is fond of saying that in order to gain an inch on your arms, you have to gain ten pounds of muscle. His point is the most effective way to build a big, strong body is with systemic overload, not localized training. If your weight training program isn't built around heavy, compound training, you're only making a fraction of the gains possible.

Now, I'm not saying that bicep curls and triceps extensions are entirely worthless. I've found that certain isolation exercises, if incorporated into a routine properly (using the right amount of weight and volume—the total number of sets—per workout), do help with strength and growth. So you will find a few isolation exercises in my program, but they are hardly the focus.

Guys that make the mistake of doing ineffective exercises often believe another myth, which is the lie that you have to constantly change up your routine to make gains. This is complete nonsense peddled by the garbage workout mags. You're in the gym to get bigger and stronger, and that requires three simple things: lift progressively heavier weights, eat correctly, and give your body sufficient rest.

Regularly changing exercises simply isn't necessary because your goals limit the exercises that you should be doing. If you're looking to build an overall solid foundation of muscle, you should be doing the same types of exercises every week, and they will include things like Squats, Deadlifts, Bench Presses, Dumbbell Presses, Military Presses, and others. If you're doing these exercises correctly, your strength will skyrocket, and you will gain muscle faster than you ever imagined possible.

If you're a veteran lifter that is looking to sculpt little bits and pieces for competitive or aesthetic purposes, then you'd do a different training routine, but again the variables would only be weight and reps, not exercises.

MYTH & MISTAKE #4:

<u>Lifting Like an Idiot</u>

One of the most painful sights in gyms is the hordes of ego lifters spastically throwing around weights with reckless abandon. I cringe not only out of pity but out of the anticipation of injuries that could strike at any moment.

While it might seem like another shocking generality, it's true nonetheless. Most guys don't have a clue as to the proper form of exercises. This ignorance stunts their gains, causes unnecessary wear and tear on ligaments, tendons, and joints, and opens the door to debilitating injuries (especially as weights get heavy on things like the shoulders, elbows, knees, and lower back).

Some of these guys just don't know any better, and some are more interested in looking cool than in making real gains. You're not going to fall into this trap. You're going to do your exercises with perfect form, and while your weights may be lighter than Mr. Huff and Puff, he'll be secretly wondering why you look so much better.

MYTH & MISTAKE #5:

Lifting Like a Wussy

Building a great body is a pain in the butt. It takes considerable time, effort, discipline, and dedication. I don't care what anybody tells you—it doesn't come easy.

Quite frankly, most guys like to train like wussies. They don't want to push themselves. They don't want to exert too much effort. And of course, their bodies don't change much. They come in each day an exact duplicate of the last. Eventually, they quit out of despair and frustration.

Well, they are giving in to one of our most primal instincts. We humans instinctively avoid pain and discomfort and seek pleasure and ease in life. But, if we let that inclination color our workouts, we're doomed.

Working out correctly is a bit counter-intuitive. It's intense and uncomfortable. Sometimes you just don't want to do that final exercise. Sometimes you dread that next set of squats. Muscle soreness can be annoying. Sometimes joints and tendons can ache.

But, these things are all just a part of the game, and if you push through them and resolve that your body IS going to meet the goals you set for it, then you're going to make great gains—period.

MYTH & MISTAKE #6:

Eating to Stay Small or Get Fat

As you've probably heard, you grow *outside* of the gym, and that requires sufficient rest and proper nutrition. Many guys get both wrong—they overtrain and don't eat enough calories (or eat way too many), don't get enough protein (or way too much), eat bad carbs and fats, and don't schedule and proportion their meals correctly.

If you don't eat enough calories and get enough protein, carbs, and fats throughout the day, you

simply don't grow. It doesn't matter how hard you lift—if you don't eat enough, you won't gain any muscle to speak of. On the other hand, if you eat too many calories, eat too many bad carbs and fats, and don't know how to size your meals properly, you can gain muscle, but it will be hidden underneath an ugly sheath of unnecessary fat.

When you know how to eat properly, however, you can gain eye-popping amounts of muscle while staying lean, and you can lose layers of fat while maintaining, if not, increasing muscle mass.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You've just learned the path to muscle-building misery: Grind away for hours in the gym, do tons of "burn out" sets, do the wrong exercises with bad form, don't push yourself too hard, and eat incorrectly.

These mistakes are responsible for untold frustration, discouragement, confusion, and lack of results. They are the prime reasons why guys make little or no gains and quit.

So, if that's how to do it wrong, how do you correctly go about building muscle? Continue to find out.

6

THE REAL SCIENCE OF MUSCLE GROWTH

The laws of muscle growth are as certain, observable, and irrefutable as those of physics.

When you throw a ball in the air, it comes down. When you take the correct actions inside and outside the gym, your muscles grow. It's really that simple, and these laws apply regardless of how much of a "hardgainer" you think you are.

These principles have been known and followed for decades by people who built some of the greatest physiques we've ever seen. Some of these laws will be in direct contradiction to things you've read or heard, but fortunately, they require no leaps of faith or reflection. They are *practical*. Follow them, and you get immediate results. Once these rules have worked for you, you will know they're true.

THE FIRST LAW OF MUSCLE GROWTH:

Muscles Grow *Only* if They're *Forced* to

This law may seem obvious and not worth stating, but trust me, most people just don't get it. By lifting weights, you are actually causing tiny tears (known as "micro-tears") in the muscle fibers, which the body then repairs, adapting the muscles to better handle the stimulus that caused the damage. This is the process by which muscles grow (scientifically termed *hypertrophy*).

If a workout causes too few micro-tears in the fibers, then little muscle growth will occur as a result because the body figures it doesn't need to grow the muscle to deal with such a minor stimulus again. If a workout causes too many micro-tears, then the body will fail to fully repair the muscles, and muscle growth will be stunted. If a workout causes substantial micro-tearing but the body isn't supplied with sufficient nutrition or rest, muscle growth can't occur.

For optimal muscle growth, you must lift in such a way that causes optimal micro-tearing and then you must feed your body what it needs to grow and give it the proper amount of rest.

THE SECOND LAW OF MUSCLE GROWTH:

Muscles Grow from *Overload*, Not Fatigue or "Pump"

While many guys think a burning sensation in their muscles is indicative of an intense, "growth-inducing" workout, it's actually not an indicator of an optimum workout. The "burn" you feel is simply an infusion of lactic acid in the muscle, which is produced as a muscle burns its energy stores. Lactic acid tells the body to start producing anabolic hormones, but too much *impairs* muscle growth and causes tissues to break down.

Muscle pump is also not a good indicator of future muscle growth. The pump you feel when training is a result of blood being "trapped" in the muscles, and while it's a good psychological boost and studies have shown that it can help with protein synthesis (the process in which cells build proteins), it's not a primary driver of growth.

What triggers muscle growth, then? *Overload*. Muscles must be given a clear reason to grow, and overload is the best reason. That means heavy weights, and short, intense sets of relatively low reps. This type of training causes optimal micro-tearing for strength and growth gains, and forces the body to adapt.

Drop sets, giant sets, and supersets are for the magazine-reading crowd and druggers. Such training techniques flood the muscles with lactic acid and are often done with isolation exercises, further limiting their effectiveness. They simply do NOT stimulate growth like heavy sets of compound exercises do.

THE THIRD LAW OF MUSCLE GROWTH:

Muscles Grow *Outside* the Gym

Many training programs have you do too many sets per workout, and some have you train the same body parts too often. They play into the common misconception that building muscle is simply a matter of lifting excessively. People who have fallen into this bad habit need to realize that if they did less of the *right thing*, they would get *more*.

If you do too many sets in a workout, you can cause more micro-tears than your body can properly repair, and you can spend too much time working out, which drastically elevates cortisol levels and hinders growth.

If you wait too few days before training a muscle group again, you're overloading a muscle that hasn't fully repaired from the last training session, and you can actually lose strength and muscle size. If you allow your muscles enough recuperation time (and eat correctly), however, you will experience maximum strength and size gains.

Studies have shown that, depending on the intensity of your training and your level of fitness, it takes the body 2 – 5 days to fully repair muscles subjected to weight training. You experience this by feeling the reduction of muscle soreness, inflammation, and weakness that follows your training.

Another aspect of rest is sleep, of course. The amount of sleep that you get plays a crucial role in gaining muscle. While your body produces growth hormone on a 24-hour cycle, the majority of it is produced during sleep, and this is a major anabolic substance.

Good general advice is to get enough sleep each night that you wake up feeling rested and aren't tired throughout the day. For most people, this means 6 – 12 hours of sleep each night.

THE FOURTH LAW OF MUSCLE GROWTH:

Muscles Grow *Only* if They're Properly Fed

How important is nutrition? Nutrition is nearly *everything*. Simply put, your diet determines about 70 – 80% of how you look (muscular or scrawny, ripped or flabby). You could do the perfect workouts and give your muscles the perfect amount of rest, but if you don't eat correctly, you won't grow—*period*.

Sure, we all know to eat protein, but how much? How many times per day? Which kinds? What about carbs—which kinds are best? How much? When should they be eaten to maximize gains? And fats...are they important? How much do you need, and what are the best ways to get them? Last but not least, how many calories should you be eating every day?

Bigger Leaner Stronger is going to give you the definitive answers to all of these questions and more so that you never make a diet mistake again.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Packing on slabs of rock-solid lean mass is, in essence, just a matter of following these four laws religiously: lift hard, lift heavy, get sufficient rest, and feed your body correctly. That's how you build a strong, healthy, ripped body. It's much simpler than the marketing departments of supplement companies and their magazines want you to think.

The workouts you will be doing as a part of *Bigger Leaner Stronger* are built on these four principles, and if you set aside any doubts or other ideas that you may have and give these methods an honest try, you'll be amazed at how quickly your body will change.

THE 5 BIGGEST FAT LOSS MYTHS & MISTAKES

For thousands of years now, a lean, muscular body has been the holy grail of the male physique. It was a hallmark of the ancient heroes and gods, and it has remained a revered quality, idolized in pop culture, achieved by few, but coveted by many.

With obesity rates over 33% here in America (and steadily rising), it would appear that getting shredded and becoming one of the "physically elite" must require a level of knowledge, discipline, and sacrifice beyond what most humans are capable of.

Well, this simply isn't true. The knowledge is easy enough to understand (in fact, you're learning everything you need to know in this book). Sure, it requires discipline and some "sacrifice" in that no, you can't eat three pizzas a week and have a six pack, but here's the kicker: When you're training and dieting correctly, you will *enjoy* the lifestyle. You will look forward to the gym each day. You won't mind the weeks of cutting. You won't feel compelled to eat junk food or desserts (even though you will be able to have them).

You will look and feel better than you ever have before—and this will continue to improve every month—and you will find it infinitely more pleasurable and valuable than being lazy, fat, and addicted to ice cream and potato chips. When you can get into this "zone," you can do whatever you want with your body—the results are inevitable, it's just a matter of time.

But, most people never find this sweet spot. Why? Well, the most practical answer to that question is twofold: 1) They don't have a strong enough desire to get there (they don't have their "inner game" sorted out), and 2) they lack the know-how required to make it happen, which leads to poor results, which kills discipline and makes sacrifices no longer worthwhile.

In this chapter, I want to address the five most common myths and mistakes of getting ripped. Like those of building muscle, these fallacies and errors have snuck into our heads via magazines, advertising, trainers, friends, etc. Let's dispel them once and for all so that they can't block your path to having the ripped body that you desire.

MYTH & MISTAKE #1:

<u>Counting Calories is Unnecessary</u>

I don't know how many people I've consulted who wanted to lose weight but didn't want to have to count calories. This statement is about as logical as saying that they want to drive across the country but don't want to have to pay attention to their gas tank.

Now, I won't be too hard on them because they didn't even know what a calorie was, and they

just didn't want to be bothered with having to count something. Well, whether you want to call it "counting" calories or whatever else, in order to lose weight, you have to regulate food intake.

In order to lose fat, you must keep your body burning more energy than you're feeding it, and the energy potential of food is measured in calories. Eat too many calories—give your body more potential energy than it needs—and it has no incentive to burn fat.

What people are actually objecting to with counting calories is trying to figure out what to eat while on the run every day or what to buy when rushing through the grocery store. When they have a 30-minute window for lunch and run to the nearest restaurant, they don't want to have to analyze the menu to figure out calories. They just order something that sounds healthy and hope for the best. But, little do they know that their quick, "healthy" meal has hundreds of more calories than they should've eaten. Repeat that for dinner, and a day of weight loss progress is totally lost.

Well, that's the problem—not "having to counting calories." They are making it unnecessarily hard by failing to plan and prepare meals. It might seem easier to just heat up a big plate of leftovers or grab Chipotle for lunch and carry on with your day, but that convenience comes with a price: little or no weight loss.

MYTH & MISTAKE #2:

<u>Do Cardio = Lose Weight</u>

Every day I see overweight people grinding away on the cardio machines. And, week after week goes by with them looking fatter than ever.

They are under the false impression that idly going through the motions on an elliptical machine or stationary bike will somehow flip a magical fat loss switch in the body. Well, that's not how it works.

You already know how to lose fat (make your body burn more energy than it gets from food), and cardio can *enhance* fat loss in two ways: 1) by burning calories and 2) by speeding up your metabolic rate.

To clarify point #2, your body burns a certain number of calories regardless of any physical activity, and this is called your *basal metabolic rate*. Your total caloric expenditure for a day would be your BMR plus the energy expended during any physical activities.

When your metabolism is said to "speed up" or "slow down," what this means is that your basal metabolic rate has gone up or down. That is, your body is burning more calories while at rest (allowing you to eat more calories without putting on fat) or burning less (making it easier to eat too much and gain fat).

But here's the thing with cardio: If you don't eat correctly, that nightly run or bike ride won't necessarily save you.

Let's say you're trying to lose weight and are unwittingly eating six hundred calories more than your body burns during the day. You go jogging for thirty minutes at night, which burns about three hundred calories. That leaves you with a daily excess of three hundred calories, and the small jump in your metabolic rate from the cardio won't be enough to burn that up plus burn fat stores.

You could continue like this for *years* and never get lean. As a matter of fact, you'll probably slowly put on weight instead.

MYTH & MISTAKE #3:

Chasing the Fads

The Atkins Diet. The South Beach Diet. The Paleo Diet. The HCG Diet (this one really makes me cringe). The Hollywood Diet. The Body Type Diet. It seems like a new one pops up every month or two. I can't keep up these days.

While not all "latest and greatest" diets are bad (Paleo is quite healthy, actually), the sheer abundance of fad diets being touted by ripped actors is making people pretty confused as to what the "right way" to lose weight is (and understandably so).

The result is that many people jump from diet to diet, failing to get the results they desire. And, they buy into some pretty stupid stuff simply because they don't understand the physiology of metabolism and fat loss. The rules are the rules, and no fancy names or snake oil supplements will help you get around them.

In this book, you're going to learn how simple getting ripped really is. Once you understand the basic principles of why the body stores fat and how to coax it into shedding it, you'll see how asinine many of the fad diets taking gyms by storm really are.

MYTH & MISTAKE #4:

Doing Low Weight and High Reps Gets You Toned

This myth goes like this: If you want that lean, toned look, you want to do a BUNCH of reps with low weight. This is just plain wrong.

To be honest, I can't think of a reason why anyone would want to do a routine based on low weight and high reps. While there's a never-ending debate as to what rep ranges are best for hypertrophy (muscle growth), many studies agree that doing more than fifteen reps causes little–to-no improvements in muscle strength or size due to insufficient overload.

Being shredded is a matter of having low body fat. Nothing else. Building muscle mass is a matter of overloading the muscles and letting them repair. Nothing more.

Light weights don't overload the muscles no matter how many reps you do (remember that *fatigue* doesn't trigger growth). No overload = no growth.

Heavy weights, however, do overload the muscles and force them to adapt. Optimum overload and proper nutrition and rest = fast, noticeable growth.

So, even if you don't want to gain too much muscle mass—let's say fifteen pounds—the fastest route to that goal is *heavy weight*. Once you're there, you can simply maintain what you have (more on that later).

How heavy should you be going, though? How many exercises, sets, and reps should you do? You'll find out soon!

MYTH & MISTAKE #5:

Spot Reduction

How many guys have you seen doing crunches "to get a six pack"? How many girls try to target their butts and thighs to "burn away the fat"?

Well, that's not how it works. You can't reduce fat in any particular area of your body by targeting it with exercises. You can reduce fat by proper dieting, and your body will decide how it comes off (which areas will become lean first and which will be stubborn). Our bodies are all genetically programmed differently, and there's nothing we can do to change that. We all have our "fat spots" that annoy us to no end, and that's just genetics for you. Some guys I know store every last pound in their hips while others are fortunate to have their fat accumulate more in their chest, shoulders, and arms more so than their waistline.

Rest assured, however, that you can lose as much fat all over your body as you want, and you *can* get as shredded as you want; you'll just have to be patient and let your body lean out in the way it's programmed to.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Like building muscle, many people approach fat loss completely wrong and thus fail to achieve their weight goals. But, just like building muscle, the laws of fat loss are actually very simple and incredibly effective. Carry on to learn the laws and how to put them to work for you.

8

THE REAL SCIENCE OF HEALTHY FAT LOSS

Before getting into the laws of fat loss, I want to share some insight into how your body views fat versus muscle. Your body views fat as an asset and muscle as a liability. Why?

Because evolution has taught the body that having fat means being able to survive the times when food is scarce. Many thousands of years ago, when our ancestors were roaming the wilderness, they sometimes journeyed for days without food, and their bodies lived off fat stores. Starving, they would finally kill an animal and feast, and their bodies knew to prepare for the next bout of starvation by storing fat. Having fat was literally a matter of life and death.

This genetic programming is still in us, ready to be used. If you starve your body, it will burn fat to stay alive, but it will also slow down its metabolic rate to conserve energy, becoming fully prepared to store fat once you start feeding it higher quantities of food again.

Muscle, on the other hand, is viewed as a liability because it *costs* energy to maintain. While there is much debate as to the exact numbers in terms of calories, a pound of muscle on your body burns more energy than carrying a pound of fat. Thus, your body doesn't want to carry more muscle than it has to because it knows that it has to keep it properly fed, and this requires calories that it may or may not get.

So, what does this mean for fat loss? Well, it means that you have to show your body that it has no reason to store excess fat and, in a sense, coax it to the level that you desire. Same goes for building muscle. If you don't provide your body with the perfect building conditions (proper training, proper nutrition, and proper rest), it will be inclined to simply not grow its muscles.

All right, let's dive into to the fundamental laws of fat loss.

THE FIRST LAW OF FAT LOSS:

<u>Eat Less Than You Expend = Lose Weight</u>

Fat loss is just a science of numbers, much like gaining muscle. No matter what anyone tells you, getting ripped boils down to nothing more than manipulating a simple mathematical formula: energy consumed versus energy expended. As you would expect, this has been determined beyond the shadow of a doubt by many studies, including the definitive study conducted by the University of Lausanne.

When you give your body more calories (potential energy) than it burns off, it stores fat (unless your metabolism is very fast, in which case you may not store fat but won't lose it either). When you give your body less calories than it burns throughout the day, it must make up for that deficit by

burning its own energy stores (fat), leading to the ultimate goal, fat loss. It doesn't even matter what you eat—if your calories are right, you'll lose weight. Don't believe me?

Professor Mark Haub, from Kansas State University, conducted a weight loss study on himself in 2010. He started the study at 211 pounds and 33.4% body fat (overweight). He calculated that he would need to eat about 1,800 calories per day to lose weight without starving himself. He followed this protocol for two months and lost 27 pounds, but here's the kicker: while he did have one protein shake and a couple servings of vegetables each day, two-thirds of his daily caories came from Twinkies, Little Debbies, Doritos, sugary cereals, and Oreos—a "convenience store diet," as he called it. And he not only lost the weight, but his "bad" cholesterol, or LDL, dropped 20 percent and his "good" cholesterol, or HDL, increased 20 percent.

Now, Haub doesn't recommend this diet, of course, but he was doing it to prove a point. When it comes to fat loss, calories are king.

Healthy fat loss *isn't* as simple as drastically cutting calories, however. If you eat too little, your body will go into "starvation mode" and sure, it will lose fat, but you will also lose muscle. Plus, worst of all, your metabolic rate will slow down, and once you start eating more, you'll quickly gain the fat back (and sometimes even more than you lost). This is what leads to yo-yo dieting.

So yes, you will need to watch your calories. Yes, you will get used to feeling a little hungry (at least for the first week or two of cutting). Yes, you will have to stay disciplined and skip the daily desserts. But, if you do it right, you can get absolutely *shredded* without losing muscle...or even while gaining muscle (yes, this can be done—more on that later).

THE SECOND LAW OF FAT LOSS:

<u>Eat Small, Frequent Meals</u>

Most people have heard this advice before, but they don't understand *why* it helps.

The most common reason given for increasing meal frequency is that it increases metabolism. It makes logical sense—by putting food in our bodies every few hours, it has to constantly work to break it down, which should speed up our metabolism, right?

Well, the jury is still out on this one. Studies contradict each other left and right. Some have found that several smaller meals per day increased metabolic rates in subjects, while others found that it didn't.

What has been conclusively proven, however, is that people who consume smaller, more frequent meals each day have more success losing weight than those who eat larger, fewer meals.

Why?

Because when people ate only 2 – 3 meals per day, they found it very hard to control their calories due to hunger, which led to overeating. By eating 4 – 6 meals per day, however, people

found it much easier to stick to their diet plans because they never felt famished.

So, while some people have figured out how to make 2 – 3 large meals per day work in terms of fat loss and muscle growth, I've found that method of dieting significantly harder to stick to than 4 – 6 smaller meals per day.

THE THIRD LAW OF FAT LOSS:

Use Cardio to Help Burn Fat

As you know, doing cardio doesn't equal burning fat. It can accelerate fat loss by burning calories and by speeding up your metabolic rate, but whether you actually lose fat or not will be determined by your daily caloric intake and expenditure.

Now, with that being said, most guys find cardio necessary in order to get into the "super lean" category (10% body fat and under) because you can only cut your calories so much before you start to lose strength and muscle mass. Some, however, don't need to bother—they simply regulate their calories and get as lean as they want. This is really just a matter of genetics and individual physiology.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Believe it or not, easy fat loss depends on these three laws and no others. The U.S. weight loss market generates over *$60 billion per year*, and, drugs and invasive surgeries aside, any and all workable weight loss methods rely on the three simple rules you just read to achieve results.

Sure, you can get fancy and count "points" instead of calories, can come up with all kinds of creative recipes, can have your miniature desserts, and so on. Regardless, the fundamentals of fat loss don't need a fancy name or marketing campaign. They really are this simple.

9

THE INNER AND OUTER GAMES OF HEALTH AND FITNESS

There's something mystical about three months of training.

That's when many people quit. Strangely enough, I've seen dozens of people over the years make it to three or four months and, for one reason or another, just disappear. Some people got sick and never returned. Others decided to take a week off and turned it into a permanent break. Others were just plain lazy and started making excuses as to why they don't really care about being in shape anymore.

Most of these people had one thing in common: They weren't happy with their gains, and without visible results for their efforts, it's understandable that their motivation waned. Fortunately for you, you're not going to have this problem. If you follow exactly what you learn in this program, you'll make incredible gains and will feel more motivated after three months than you do right now.

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of training and diet, however, I want you to know that there are two equally important aspects of achieving the body of your dreams, and I call them the "outer game" and "inner game" of training.

The outer game is the physical stuff—how to lift, how to eat, how to rest, and so on—and this is what most trainers, books, and magazines focus on. But the inner game is the less-discussed aspect of training, and if you don't have this squared away, you'll be in for a rough ride.

The inner game is, of course, the mental side of training and diet, and this is what really sets apart the great physiques from the mediocre. Building a killer physique is not a matter of jumping on the bandwagon of some new fad workout program for a few months—it's a matter of adopting a disciplined, orderly approach to how you handle your body, which is quite a lifestyle change for most.

Now, people's biggest mental barriers in this world are *lack of motivation* and *lack of discipline*. They usually start out full of resolve and intention, but within only a few weeks, their dedication is wavering. That new TV show is starting during gym time... That extra hour of sleep would really hit the spot... A few days off isn't a big deal... Another cheat meal shouldn't hurt too much...

Well, these are the things that lead you down the slippery slope of getting less-than-great results and eventually quitting altogether. While it's true that some people are just more naturally disciplined than others, anyone can use the simple tricks I'm going to teach you in the next couple of chapters to get mentally prepared to win and to stay the course even when tempted to go astray.

10

HOW TO SET FITNESS GOALS THAT WILL MOTIVATE YOU

This is so simple and clichéd that you'd think it wouldn't need stating, but it does: Before you lift a weight or cut a calorie, you *must* have specific, tangible goals set in your mind as to why you're doing it.

People with vague, unrealistic, or uninspiring health or fitness goals (or none at all) are always the first to quit. They're easy to spot, too. They show up randomly and seem to sleepwalk through their training routines, wandering from machine to machine, going through the motions. Week after week, they complain about how hard it is gain or lose weight.

Let me assure you that anyone who has the type of body that you aspire to has very specific, realistic health and fitness goals and is driven by them, progressing slowly but surely every day. When they meet one goal, they set another goal to stay motivated. This is what we're going to work out for you in this chapter.

Guys have many different reasons for training. Some like the game of pushing their bodies past its limits. Some want to look good to impress girls. Some want to feel more confident about themselves. Some want to be healthy and feel good.

The reality is that all of these things are fine reasons to train. Sure, I could give you a nice list of benefits of being in great shape, such as looking great, feeling great, having high energy levels, being resistant to sickness and disease, and so on, but the important thing is that you work out very specifically what fires *you* up about training.

We might as well start with what people usually consider more important: the visual. Hey, there's nothing to be ashamed of here. Every single person I know who has built an awesome physique was at least 50% motivated by the looks they wanted. Sure, having no regard for health and only chasing looks leads to drugs and other harmful habits, but there's nothing wrong with being motivated by wanting to look a certain way. I value my health highly and am not solely driven by vanity, but I would be lying if I said I don't care as much about the looks. I think being muscular and ripped looks awesome, and I feel good when I look in the mirror.

STEP ONE:

WHAT DOES YOUR IDEAL BODY LOOK LIKE?

The first step of establishing your goals is to determine what your ideal body would look like. Not just in your head, but in reality. You need to find pictures of exactly what you want to look like and save them for future reference.

It might seem silly for you to go searching on the internet for pictures of ripped guys, but it's important that you have an exact visual image of how you want your body to look. Throwing around words like "ripped" and "six pack" to describe your goal isn't nearly as motivating as looking at pictures of real bodies that you are working toward.

And here's a fact: If you follow this program exactly and work hard, you *can* have the type of body you dream of. The only case where I would say that this program *can't* get you there is if you want to look like a hulking, professional bodybuilder. That's a whole other game altogether. But I doubt that's your goal. Most guys just want to be muscular and shredded, and *everyone* can accomplish that if they dedicate themselves to it and follow the right game plan.

Two good sites to look through for ideal body shots are SimplyShredded.com and BodyBuilding.com's BodySpace. I'm also building a little collection of my inspiration on Pinterest, which you can find at http://www.pinterest.com/mikebls.

STEP TWO:

WHAT WOULD YOUR IDEAL STATE OF HEALTH BE LIKE?

Now that you've worked out what you want to look like, let's take a look at the other side of this coin: health. Even if looking a certain way is your primary motivation for training, you will soon learn that the health benefits are just as motivating. You're going to feel better physically, you're going to have higher energy levels, you're going to get stronger, you're going to be more mentally alert, you're going to have a stronger sex drive, and more.

Work out a health goal that you find motivating. Mine is along these lines: t*o have a vital, energetic, strong, and disease-free body that lives long and allows me to stay active and enjoy my life to the fullest*. For me, that's what this is all about. I want to live a long life, feel good, watch my kids grow up, and never suffer from debilitating diseases.

I'm sure your health interests are along the same lines, but feel free to work out your individual goals in whatever words best communicate to you.

STEP THREE:

WHY DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS?

All right, now that you've worked out what you want to look like and what level of health you want, the next question is *why*. What are the reasons for achieving those goals? This is completely personal, so write whatever is most motivating to you. For the sake of simplicity, first write the "whys" for the looks goals, then focus on the health goal.

Maybe you want to boost your confidence; maybe you want to better enjoy sports you play or physically taxing hobbies of yours; maybe you want to get more attention from the opposite sex; maybe you want to feel the satisfaction of overcoming physical barriers; maybe you want to be able to participate in physical activities with your kids; hell, maybe you want to beat your friends in arm

wrestling matches. Whatever your reasons, just write them all down.

For the sake of simplicity, first write the "whys" for the looks goals, then focus on the health goals.

THE BOTTOM LINE

By doing these three simple steps, you'll have created a powerful "motivation sheet" that will always point the way. When you feel a bit tired and are dreading the gym, you can just look at that sheet, and you'll probably change your mind. When you're out with friends, watching them stuff themselves silly while you're eating your fish and vegetables, you'll know exactly why you're doing it.

This is the simple yet powerful formula that I've used to keep myself continually motivated to train and diet for years. My goals have changed over time, but I've always ensured that I knew where I was going and why. Chances are you will greatly benefit by doing the same.

11

THE CODE OF A GOOD TRAINING PARTNER

Working out with a bad partner sucks. A lot.

Working out with a good partner is great, however, and it's actually a very important aspect of staying motivated and on track. Not only does having a partner hold you accountable to show up (if you skip, you're not only letting yourself down but your partner too), but it also helps to have someone to spot you on certain exercises, to push you for another rep, or to go up in weight.

A good partner can make a big difference as time goes on. Those days that you would've skipped solo but went because of your partner will add up to real gains, as will the times where you wouldn't have gone up in weight or wouldn't have pushed yourself for those last couple of reps.

So, I *highly* recommend that you find someone to work out with before you start, and the two of you should agree to the following code.

THE CODE OF A GOOD TRAINING PARTNER

1. I will show up on time for every workout, and if I can't avoid missing one, I'll let my partner know as soon as I know.

2. I will come to the gym to *train*—not to chat. When we're in the gym, we focus on our workouts, we're always ready to spot each other, and we get our work done efficiently.

3. I will train hard to set a good example for my partner.

4. I will push my partner to do more than he thinks he can. It's my job to motivate him to do more weight and more reps than he believes possible.

5. I will be supportive of my partner and will compliment him on his gains.

6. I won't let my partner get out of a workout easily. I will reject any excuses that are short of an actual emergency or commitment that can't be rescheduled, and I will insist that he comes and trains. In the case where there's a valid excuse, I'll offer to train at a different time so we can get our workout in (if at all possible).

Such a code might seem silly, but if you and your partner keep to these six points, you'll be doing each other a huge favor and will make great gains together.

On the flip side, if your partner can't keep to these points—if he's inconsistent in showing up, if

he's more interested in chatting than lifting, if he trains lethargically, if he doesn't push you to do more, etc.— then he's a *bad training partner* and is actually doing more harm to you than good. You need to get him onto this program and follow the above code, or you need to find someone else to train with that embodies the above commitments.

12

IF YOU CAN'T MEASURE IT, YOU DON'T KNOW IT

Sir William Thomson, also known as Lord Kelvin, was an ingenious physicist and engineer, and he said that when you can measure something and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you can't measure it or express it numbers, your knowledge is lacking.

This insight is actually very applicable to training and dieting. If you can measure your progress (or lack thereof) and express it in real numbers, then you know if you're going in the right direction or not. If you don't have any way to measure progress, then you're going at it blind, hoping for the best.

One of the most effective protections against getting stuck in a rut of no gains is keeping a training and diet journal. I know this may sound a bit overboard at first, but trust me, it makes a *huge* difference. I consider it absolutely *vital* to making long-term gains.

Let me ask you a question. What is the most frustrating thing guys run into with their training? Hands down, the answer to that question is *hitting a plateau and getting stuck in a rut*. Having their Bench Press stick at the same weight for weeks. Curling the same dumbbells for a couple of months. With this comes stagnant muscle growth, too, and nothing is more annoying than taking the time and effort to hit the gym every day just to look the same week after week.

And what about dieting? What's the most frustrating thing guys run into here? *Not losing or gaining weight as quickly as they should be.* Many guys think they're eating right but that for some "inexplicable" reason, they aren't losing much fat or building much muscle.

Well, let me warn you that if you don't keep a training and diet journal, you're almost guaranteed to run into these problems. You're going to plateau in your training, and you're going to forever struggle with eating correctly (especially cutting down). Why?

THE TRAINING JOURNAL

Building your ideal body takes time. As the old adage goes, it's a marathon, not a sprint. Now, if you know what you're doing, you can make incredible gains and enjoy the ride, but no matter how you look at it, it takes a real investment of time and effort.

The key to growing your muscles is to a*lways get stronger*. For your muscles to get stronger and adapt to progressively heavier weights, they must grow—it's that simple. Now, the tricky thing about muscle strength is that it comes slowly, bit by bit. If you're just starting out, you're going to see huge jumps in strength for the first several months, but eventually your strength gains will slow down. From that point on, you will have to consciously work for every pound of improvement on your lifts. And, of course, this is where things get hazy for people who don't keep journals, and they end up falling into the routine of the same exercises, same weights, and same reps—the best way to make no

gains—or worse, different exercises with random weights, which doesn't allow for any measurement of progress.

How do you avoid this? That's where your journal comes in. Your goal each week is to do just a little more than last week. That doesn't necessarily mean more weight, because going up in weight on every exercise every week would be impossible. It also includes reps. More reps eventually turns into more weight. For example, if you benched 225 for 4 reps on week 1, for 5 reps on week 2, and for 6 reps on week 3, you should be able to come in on week 4 and do 4 reps of 230. The process then restarts, and you move on up to 235, 240, and so on. This is how strength is built—one rep at a time.

If you don't keep a journal, however, you probably won't know what you did the week before. Sure, you might make a mental note of the "ego" lifts like Bench Press and Dumbbell Curls, but what about everything else? You need to approach *all* lifts in the same way. Your mantra should be, "One more rep!" If you can get one more rep on an exercise than you did last week (while maintaining proper form), pat yourself on the back, because you've made progress. If you can't do any more than the week before, don't despair, but you need to push harder the next week. If you're stuck for several weeks, you need to check your nutrition and rest, because something is off.

HOW TO KEEP A TRAINING JOURNAL

So how do you keep a training journal? Simple. You can download an application for your iPod or phone (I like *FitnessFast*, *Gym Buddy* and *JEFit*), or you can keep it old school and get a notebook.

In the notebook, write a series of things for each training day: how many weeks it's been since you took a week off to rest and the day, date, and body part you're going to be training that day. You should also weigh yourself once or twice a week (in the morning, in your underwear, after the bathroom, and on an empty stomach) and record it in your book.

You then list out the exercises you're going to do and look at the previous week. You assess whether you're going up in reps or weight this week (you'll learn more about this soon) and then start your first exercise, and write down what you did. You move through your workout this way, always looking back to ensure that you are doing more reps or more weight than the week before. Here's an example of how I kept my written journal before switching to an app:

Week 4

192 lbs

8/14/11

Monday

Chest

Bench Press – 275 x 4, x 4, x 4 (feel strong)

Incline Dumbbell Press – 110 x 5, x 5, x 4

Flat Dumbbell Press – 110 x 5, x 5, x5

Pretty simple, right? I often made notes if I felt particularly strong or weak on an exercise, if I struggled heavily with a set, if some kind of ache or pain was bothering me, if I didn't sleep well the night before, etc.

Keeping your journal like this allows you to always have your eye on improvement and to never fall backward or get stuck (and if this does happen, you can discover very specific reasons why and find remedies that will help you bust out of a rut).

There's really nothing else to the training journal. Good apps allow you to track all the same things and also give you nifty graphs to show your progress.

THE DIET JOURNAL

As you'll soon learn, dieting is a very precise activity, especially when you're cutting. It requires that you split an exact daily requirement of calories, protein, carbs, and fats into 4 – 6 meals each day to be eaten every 3 – 4 hours.

The easiest way to do this is to eat the same food every meal, every day. While this may sound really boring, it has its benefits. It's easy to prepare for, easy to follow, and doesn't require any "on the spot" calorie counting, tracking, or adjusting. If you don't mind doing it, it'll make your life easier. Some people find this agonizingly boring, however; they need some variety in their diets, which is fine, but the variety must be *planned*, not spontaneous.

As you can imagine, trying to figure out calories, protein, carbs, and fats on the fly, in the hustle and bustle of work and everything else, is almost impossible. How many calories are actually in that chicken salad you just ordered at the restaurant that your buddies wanted to go to? (More than you probably think.) What about the handful of chips you just ate as an "unscheduled" snack? And the Starbucks latte? The little bag of pretzels? This is how dieting to lose weight utterly fails...one unplanned calorie at a time.

This can be a problem for people trying to gain weight too. In order to gain muscle, your body needs to be fed enough calories, protein, carbs, and fats every day (and must get protein every three hours or so), and it can be hard to hit your numbers when you're scrambling for food every few hours.

How can you have some variety and still follow your diet precisely and thus lose weight (or

gain muscle while staying lean)? That's what the diet journal is for. The primary use of the diet journal isn't to just *record* what you've eaten throughout the day, but to *plan out* your meals for each day (and then record what you actually end up eating, of course).

Once you know how many calories and how much protein, carbs, and fats you should be eating each day, you can plan out your meals using a nutrition facts database online, such as www.calorieking.com and www.caloriecount.about.com (my two favorites).

I recommend using a spreadsheet to work this out, and the simplest way to do it is to list out, meal by meal, a full day's worth of food that you can easily eat throughout the day. List out the calories, protein, carbs, and fat of each food for each meal, totaling the numbers as you go. Tweak things as needed until you have one day's worth of food that meets your caloric and macronutritional needs.

I like to come up with a few different breakfast, lunch, and dinner options and then rotate them throughout the week. You can then shop for and prepare them as needed. I recommend doing this once or twice per week, planning and preparing a week's worth of meals in one or two days per week (I like Sundays and Wednesdays).

Then, in your journal, write out the following for each day:

1. Your dietary target for calories, protein, carbs, and fats.

2. The foods you plan on eating for each meal with the total calories, protein, carbs, and fats noted.

3. A note of what you actually ate for each meal. You can simply put a check mark next to the meal that you planned if you stuck to it, but if you had to deviate (which you want to avoid, but sometimes can't help), you should note what you ate instead along with the calories, protein, carbs, and fats.

If you were using a notebook, it would look something like this:

10/3/2011

Monday

Targets:

1,900 calories

200 grams of protein

200 grams of carbs

40 grams of fat

Meals:

7AM–Meal #1:

(Pre-workout meal)

1 cup of rice milk

30g whey protein

30g protein

25g carbs

6g fat

270 calories

9AM–Meal #2:

(Post-workout smoothie)

2 cups of rice milk

1 banana

1 scoop of protein powder

30g protein

75g carbs

2.5g fat

442 calories

(And so on throughout the day, breaking down each meal.)

As the old proverb goes, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” This is very true with diet. It is basically impossible to get shredded without planning and preparing in the way I’ve just described, and this is why most people fail to achieve the results they desire.

13

INTENSITY AND FOCUS—YOUR TWO SECRET WEAPONS

If you've trained before, you know what makes a great workout: pushing yourself to the limit with the weights feeling light. Nothing distracts you, and you are fully in the moment, enjoying the blood engorging your muscles. You feel big and strong.

The secret to having this kind of workout every day is lifting with *intensity* and *focus*. Training with maximum intensity and focus will enable you to lift the heaviest weights possible and thus literally force your muscles to grow.

What do I mean by intensity and focus, though? Does it mean grunting loudly with each rep with heavy metal blaring in your headphones? While some guys who do this actually train pretty intensely, none of the showmanship is necessary.

Intensity is simply the level of physical and mental exertion you give to your workout. It's how intent you are on pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone and making progress. It's your desire to make it through each set no matter what.

A high-intensity workout is one where you feel like you didn't leave anything in the tank. You didn't settle for a lighter weight when you felt you could've gone up. Your mind wasn't wandering elsewhere while you were lifting. You weren't just robotically going through the motions—you were consciously pounding out every rep and every set. "One more rep!"

By *focus*, I mean mental concentration, having your mind on your lifts and not on the TV show you watched last night, the party later that night, the argument with your girlfriend, or whatever else. I don't want to get too "woo-woo" on you and talk about visualizing every lift, but there's definitely something to be said for having 100% of your attention on moving the weight in front of you. It's "mind over matter," as they say.

The *Bigger Leaner Stronger* training routines are built to help you maintain a high level of intensity and focus. It's much easier to do 4 – 6 reps at maximum intensity and focus than 10 – 12. It's much easier to remain focused and revved up for 45 minutes than 90. But, the routine itself doesn't supply the intensity and focus—you have to.

Don't Get Too Chatty

Training with buddies can be great, or it can be a curse. Nothing is worse than training with people who are more interested in hanging out than blasting out a workout.

While there's nothing wrong with talking while resting, don't get carried away in conversation because it'll inevitably be distracting. Your rest times will go too long. You'll have your mind on

other things when you sit down to do your set. It's just counter-productive. Save the fraternizing for after the gym.

14

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROPER NUTRITION

I think everyone who knows anything about getting big and lean agrees that nutrition is a massive piece in the puzzle. Some say it's 70% of the game, some say 80% or even 90%. Well, I say it's 100%. Yes, 100%. And lifting heavy, overloading your muscles...that's also 100% of the game. Being properly hydrated is 100%. Having the right attitude is 100% too. (Yeah, we're at 400% so far...)

My point is this: The building blocks of a great body are more like pillars than puzzle pieces. Weaken one enough, and the whole structure collapses when overloaded. That is, you can't build any appreciable amount of muscle if you don't train correctly. Your muscles won't grow if you don't give your body proper nutritional support. Muscle growth is seriously stunted by dehydration. Your gains will be lackluster if you don't train with the right attitude.

That said, I want you to have an "all or nothing" attitude about achieving your fitness and health goals. I want you to be 100% about each aspect you learn in this program and achieve 100% of the potential results. Let the weak and undisciplined give only 60% in their training, 30% in their dieting, 40% in their attitude. They're going to make you look like a god.

All right, let's now talk about this pillar of muscle growth...*nutrition*.

The nutritional aspect of fitness is incredibly powerful, and it can either work for or against you, multiplying or dividing your end results. It is the series of toll booths along the highway of muscle growth, and if you don't stop and pay each one, you don't get to go any further. It's that simple.

Proper nutrition has nothing to do with loading up on the latest, greatest "advanced muscle building" supplements that clutter the shelves of your local GNC. It's much more than eating a couple good meals per day with some snacks here and there so you don't get hungry. It means following a calculated, regimented eating plan that feeds your body the nutrients it needs to adapt to your heavy training and thus get bigger and stronger.

There are five aspects of nutrition that are of primary concern when trying to build muscle and lose fat. They are calories, protein, carbohydrates, fats, and water. Protein, carbohydrates, and fats are known as "macro-nutrients" (*macro* means "of great size; large"), and how you structure these in your diet is vitally important to your overall results. Of secondary concern to success are vitamins and minerals, which are known as "micro-nutrients," and these are essential for body's performance of many different physiological processes connected with building muscle and losing fat.

Let's talk more about each of these five aspects of nutrition.

CALORIES

As you already know, a calorie is a measurement of potential energy in a food, whether it comes from protein, carbohydrate, or fat. Like an engine, your body needs fuel to function, and it gets it from food.

A gram of protein has about 4 calories, as does a gram of carbohydrate (regardless of the source, these numbers hold more or less true). A gram of fat contains about 9 calories.

Your body uses food energy to perform any and all physiological processes that you can imagine. Your brain, lungs, heart, liver, and kidneys require energy to do their jobs. Your muscles require energy to contract and extend. Your body requires energy to build muscle and even to lose fat.

Several factors come into play when determining how much energy your body burns every day (and thus how many calories you should be eating, whether to lose weight, gain muscle, or maintain). Body size, the amount of lean mass, body temperature, the thermic effect of foods (the amount of energy it "costs" to process food for use and storage), stimulants such as caffeine, and your level of physical activity all affect how many calories your body burns every day.

Knowing how to determine your body's caloric needs and then how to translate them into specific amounts of protein, carbs, and fats is crucial to maximizing your muscle growth. As you can imagine, eating 225 grams of protein per day is much better for achieving muscle growth than eating 100 grams of fat, even though they contain about the same amount of calories.

PROTEIN

Your body needs protein for virtually every "growth" process it engages in. It uses protein to build and repair cells and to produce hormones and enzymes. Your body needs a healthy amount of protein to keep its immune system functioning optimally.

Weightlifting places considerable protein demands on the body, and as you gain more and more muscle, your body needs more and more protein to maintain it. Think of your muscles as protein reservoirs (because that's how your body views them). What do you think happens if you build muscle and then don't provide your body with the protein it needs for its upkeep? That's right—it eats the muscle away and thus reduces its need for protein.

Therefore, eating enough protein every day is rock-bottom fundamental to building muscle and increasing strength. I can't overstate the importance of this, really, because many guys just don't get it. They don't pay attention to how much protein they eat each day or miss meals, and figure it's no big deal. Well, it is. In fact, not eating enough protein each day is the easiest way to prevent muscle growth, get stuck in a rut, and quit. I've seen it happen many times.

CARBOHYDRATES

The carbohydrate is probably the most misunderstood, maligned, and feared macro-nutrient. Thanks to the scores of bogus diet plans and suggestions out there, many people equate eating carbs with getting fat. While eating TOO MANY carbs can make you fat (just as eating too much protein or fat can), carbs are hardly your enemy. They play an essential role in not only muscle growth but in

overall body function.

Regardless of what type of carbohydrate you eat—broccoli or apple pie—the body breaks it down into two substances: *glucose* and *glycogen*. Glucose is commonly referred to as "blood sugar," and it's an energy source used by your cells to do the many things they do. Glycogen is a substance stored in the liver and muscles that can be easily converted to glucose for immediate energy. When you lift weights intensely, your muscles burn up their glycogen stores to cope with the overload.

Now, why is broccoli good for you but apple pie isn't? Because your body reacts very differently to broccoli than to apple pie. You've probably heard the terms "simple" and "complex" carbs before and wondered what they meant. You might have also heard of the *glycemic index* and wondered what it was all about.

These things are actually pretty simple. The glycemic index is a numeric system of ranking how quickly carbohydrates are converted into glucose in the body. Carbs are ranked on a scale of 0 to 100 depending how they affect blood sugar levels once eaten. A GI rating of 55 and under is considered "low GI," 56 to 69 is medium, and 70 and above is high on the index. A "simple" carb is one that converts very quickly (is high on the glycemic index), such as table sugar, honey, and watermelon, while a "complex" carb is one that converts slowly (is low on the glycemic index), such as broccoli, apple, and whole-grain bread.

It's very important to know where the carbs you eat fall on the index, because studies have linked regular consumption of high-GI carbs to increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. They do have their uses, though, which we will go over shortly.

FATS

Fats are the densest energy sources available to your body. Each gram of fat contains over twice the calories of a gram of carbohydrate or protein. Healthy fats, such as those found in olive oil, avocados, flax seed oil, many nuts, and other foods are actually an important component to overall health. Fats help your body absorb the other nutrients that you give it, nourish the nervous system, help maintain cell structures, regulate hormone levels, and more.

Certain fats are unhealthy, though, and can lead to disease and other health problems. These types of fats are called *saturated fats* and *trans fats*.

Saturated fat is a form of fat found mainly in animal products such as meat, dairy, and egg yolks. Some plant foods are also high in saturated fat, such as coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil. Eating too much saturated fat can negatively affect cholesterol levels, so it should be eaten in moderation.

Trans fat is a scientifically modified form of saturated fat that has been engineered to give foods longer shelf lives. Many cheap, packaged foods are full of trans fat (such as run-of-the-mill popcorn, yogurt, and peanut butter), as are many frozen foods (such as frozen pizza, packaged pastries, cakes, etc.). Fried foods are often cooked in trans fat. This type of fat is bad news, and eating too much of it can lead to all kinds of disease and complications. It has no nutritional value for the body and thus

should be avoided altogether.

WATER

The human body is about 60% water in adult males and about 70% in adult females. Muscles are about 70% water. That alone tells you how important staying hydrated is to maintaining good health and proper body function. Your body's ability to digest, transport, and absorb nutrients from food is dependent upon proper fluid intake. Water helps prevent injuries in the gym by cushioning joints and other soft-tissue areas. When your body is dehydrated, literally every physiological process is negatively affected.

I really can't stress enough the importance of drinking clean, pure water. It has zero calories, so it will never cause you to gain weight regardless of how much you drink. (You can actually harm your body by drinking too much water, but this would require that you drink several gallons per day.)

The Institute of Medicine reported in 2004 that women should consume about 91 ounces of water —or three-quarters of a gallon—per day, and men should consume about 125 ounces per day (a gallon is 128 onces).

Now, keep in mind that those numbers include the water found in food. The average person gets about 80% of their water from drinking it and other beverages, and about 20% from the food they eat.

I've been drinking 1 – 2 gallons of water per day for years now, which is more than the IOM baseline recommendation, but I sweat a fair amount due to exercise and living in Florida, which surely makes my needs higher. I fill a one-gallon jug at the start of my day and simply make sure that I finish it by dinner time. By the time I go to bed, I'll have drank a few more glasses.

Make sure the water you drink is filtered, purified water and not tap water (disgusting, but some people drink it). There's a big difference between drinking clean, alkaline water that your body can fully utilize and drinking polluted, acidic junk from the tap or bottle (which is the case with certain brands such as Dasani and Aquafina).

I have a $250 reverse-osmosis filter with a re-mineralization component at home that produces clean, crisp water. A cheaper option is a pitcher with a built-in filter, like those made by Brita and Pur.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS

The importance of vitamins and minerals is unknown to many. Guys will rush to the store to buy the latest super-advanced, muscle-maximizing powder that contains a "proprietary blend" of fancy-sounding snake oil compounds, but few of them will pick up a multi-vitamin.

The fact is that your body needs a wide spectrum of vitamins and minerals to carry out the millions of sophisticated functions it performs every day. This is a basic need, like protein, carbohydrates, fats, and water. You want a continual supply of vitamins and minerals in your body, supporting every growth and repair process that occurs.

Ideally, we'd get all of the vitamins and minerals we need from the food we eat, but this is nearly impossible with the ever-declining quality of American soil and food (even in the world of organic). Thus, we need to supplement our food with vitamin and mineral pills. The easiest way to get all of the essential vitamins and minerals is a good multi-vitamin product.

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EAT THIS, NOT THAT—*BIGGER LEANER STRONGER* VERSION

Have you seen that stupid book, *Eat This, Not That*? Eat a Big Mac that only has 540 calories instead of an Angus Deluxe, which has 750, AND LOSE WEIGHT! Eat a Coldstone Creamery Oreo Crème Ice Cream Sandwich instead of a Sinless Cake 'n Shake Milkshake, and GET SKINNY! Eat your way thin! Lose big without ever stepping foot in the gym!

While that book's meteoric rise to popularity is a sad indictment of people's lack of willpower and ignorance as to how the body actually works, I do have to give the author props for the idea. It was the perfect product for suckers whose idea of losing weight is making their own Banana-Rum Split instead of getting the 1,000 calorie Baskin Robbins version.

Well, I'm going to give you the *Bigger Leaner Stronger* version of *Eat This, Not That*. We're going to look at different types of proteins, carbs, and fats, and when you should be eating what. We're also going to go over how often you should be eating each, when the best times of the day are for each, how to properly cheat (yes, you do get to enjoy the "bad stuff" even when you're fit), and a few more rules of eating that apply to both gaining size and getting shredded.

TYPES OF PROTEINS

There are two main sources of protein out there: whole food protein and supplement protein.

Whole food protein is, as you guessed, protein that comes from natural food sources, such as beef, chicken, fish, etc. The best forms of whole food protein are chicken, turkey, lean red meat, fish, eggs, and milk.

Protein from meat is particularly helpful when you're weightlifting. Studies clearly show that meats increase testosterone levels, but scientists aren't sure why. One study had two groups of men, all comparable in health and build, follow a weightlifting program for twelve weeks. By the end of the program, all had progressed about equally in strength, but only the meat eaters enjoyed significant muscle growth and fat loss.

"Meat" doesn't only mean red meat, by the way. Fish, chicken, turkey, pork, buffalo, and so on all qualify as "meat" in this sense, although studies have shown red meat to be the most anabolic.

I recommend that you stick to the lean varieties of meats as eating a lot of saturated fat just isn't necessary. That means fish, extra-lean cuts of beef (95% lean ground beef, or extra-lean cuts like top sirloin steak, and top and bottom round roast and steak), chicken, turkey, pork tenderloin, and so forth.

If you're vegetarian, your best options are eggs, low-fat cottage cheese (Organic Valley is my favorite brand), low-fat European style (Greek) yogurt (0% Fage is my favorite), tempeh, tofu,

quinoa, almonds, rice, and beans.

While we're on the subject of vegetarianism, some people claim that you must carefully combine your proteins if you're vegetarian or vegan to ensure your body is getting "complete" proteins (all of the amino acids needed to build tissue). This theory and the faulty research it was based on was thoroughly debunked as a myth by the American Dietetic Association, yet it still hangs around. While it's true that some sources of vegetable protein are lower in certain amino acids than other forms of protein, there is no scientific evidence to prove that they lack them altogether.

Protein supplements are powdered or liquid foods that contain protein from various sources, such as whey (a liquid remaining after milk has been curdled and strained in the process of making cheese), egg, and soy—the three most common sources of supplement protein. There are also great plant-based supplements out there that are a blend of high-quality protein sources such as quinoa, brown rice, peas, hemp, and fruit.

You don't NEED protein supplements to eat well, but it can be impractical for some to try to get all their protein from whole foods considering the fact that you will be eating protein 4 – 6 times per day.

Now, there are a few things you should know about eating protein. First is that your body can only digest and absorb so much in one sitting. According to various studies, this ranges between 30 – 60 grams depending on your metabolism and digestive tract. To be safe, you can assume your body can absorb 40 – 50 grams per meal. That means that if you miss a few meals in which you were supposed to eat 30 grams of protein, you can't just "make it up" by eating 90 grams in your next meal. Your body won't be able to absorb it all.

Another thing to know about protein is that different proteins digest at different speeds, and some are better utilized by the body than others. Beef protein, for example, is digested quickly, and 70 – 80% of what's eaten is utilized by the body (the exact number varies based on what study you read, but they all fall between 70 – 80%). Whey protein is also digested quickly and its "net protein utilization" (NPU) is in the low 90% range. Egg protein digests much slower than whey and beef, and its NPU also falls in the same range.

NPU and digestion speeds are important to know because you want to rely on high-NPU proteins to meet your daily protein requirement, and you want a quick-digesting protein for your post-workout meal, and a slow-digesting protein for your final meal before you go to bed (to help you get through the fasting that occurs during sleep).

I could give you charts and tables of the NPU rates of various proteins, but I'm going to just keep it simple. In order to meet your daily protein requirements, here are your choices:

<u>Whole Food Proteins</u>

Lean meats (beef, pork, chicken, and turkey)

Fish

Eggs

Vegetarian sources noted above

Protein Supplements

Egg

Whey

Casein

High-quality plant-based protein supplements

These are all considered "complete proteins," meaning they contain all of the essential amino acids for cellular repair and growth that your body can't synthesize itself (it creates some and has to get the rest from food).

In case you're wondering why I left soy protein off the list of recommended supplements, it's because it's just a bad protein source. To start, most soy protein supplements use genetically modified soybeans (which is a very dangerous trend encroaching further and further into the world of agriculture), and studies have shown that too much of it can increase estrogen levels and inhibit your body's testosterone production (due to a plant estrogen found in soybeans). Just stay away from it.

Now, regarding when to eat slow- or fast-digesting proteins, I recommend eating a fast-digesting protein like whey after working out to quickly spike amino acid levels in your blood, and eating a slow-digesting protein like egg or casein thirty minutes before going to bed (your body has to make it through the night with minimal muscle loss, and this requires a slow release of amino acids into the blood stream). For the rest of your supplement meals, you can do whey or egg. I like to use egg supplements because too much whey tends to bloat me.

TYPES OF CARBOHYDRATES

Your daily carbohydrate intake is vitally important to gain size and strength. Carbs not only fuel your workouts and enable you to properly overload your muscles; they play a crucial role in pre- and post-workout meals.

That being said, the majority of carbs eaten by most people are not only unhealthy because of genetically modified ingredients and heavy processing, but are also pretty high on the GI, which makes them even worse for the body.

Below is a list of common snack foods with corresponding average GI scores. The GI scores vary a bit from brand to brand, but not by much. Stay away from these carbs at all costs.

(The following information is sourced from the University of Sydney, the University of Harvard, and Livestrong.com.)

FOOD	GI
White bread bagel	72
Corn chips	63
Pretzels	83
Breakfast cereal like Cornflakes, Special K, Raisin Bran, etc.	72 – 84
Candy bar	62 – 78
Wheat or corn cracker	67 – 87
Rye cracker	64
Rice cake	78
Popcorn	72
White rice	64
Pizza	80
Raisins	64
Whole wheat bread	71
White bread	70
Baguette	95
English muffin (white bread)	77
Baked potato	85
Muesli	66

If you're a little dismayed to find many of your favorite snacks on that list, I understand. Unfortunately, these foods simply can't be eaten often if you want to have high, stable energy levels, and if you want to have a lean, vital body.

Regardless of how many carbs you need to eat per day (based on what you're trying to accomplish with your body), there's a simple rule to follow regarding high-, medium- and low-glycemic carbs.

Eat carbs in the medium-high range of the glycemic index (70 – 90 is a good rule of thumb) about 30 minutes before you train and within 30 minutes of finishing your workout. (We will work out the exact amounts for you soon.)

The reason you want some carbs before training is that you need the energy for your training. The

reason you want them after is that your muscles' glycogen stores are heavily depleted, and by replacing it quickly, you actually help your body maintain an anabolic state and not lose muscle tissue.

My favorite pre- and post-workout carbs are bananas and rice milk, but other good choices are baked potato, instant oatmeal, and fruits that are above 60 on the glycemic index, such as cantaloupe, pineapple, watermelon, dates, apricots, and figs. Some people recommend eating foods high in table sugar (sucrose) after working out because it's high on the GI, but I stay away from processed sugar as much as possible.

All other carbs you eat should be in the middle or low end of the glycemic index (60 and below is a good rule of thumb). It's really that simple. If you follow this rule, you'll avoid so many problems that others suffer from due to energy highs and lows that come with eating high-GI carbs that burn the body out.

Below are some examples of tasty, healthy carbs that you can include in your diet:

FOOD	GI
Multi-grain bread	43
Multi-grain muffin	45
Whole grain sourdough bread	48
Basmati rice	43
Brown rice	55
Apple	38
Yam	37
Black beans	30
Peanuts	14
Almonds	10
Strawberries	40
Blackberries	32
Oatmeal	58
Orange	42

So, forget stuff like sugar, white bread, processed, low-quality whole wheat bread, bagels, junk cereals, muffins, white pasta, crackers, waffles, rice cakes, corn flakes, and white rice. I wouldn't even recommend eating these things often as pre- or post-workout carbs because they're just not good for your body.

Even certain fruits, such as watermelon and dates, are bad snack foods because of where they

fall on the glycemic index. If you're unsure about a carb you like, look it up to see where it falls on the glycemic index. If it's above 60, just leave it out of your meals that aren't immediately before or after working out.

TYPES OF FATS

Getting enough healthy fats every day is pretty simple. The rule works like this:

- Keep your intake of saturated fats low (below 10% of your total calories). Saturated fat is found in foods like meat, dairy, eggs, coconut oil, bacon fat, and lard. If a fat is solid at room temperature, it's a saturated fat.

- Completely avoid trans fats, which are the worst type of saturated fat. Trans fats are found in processed foods, such as cookies, cakes, fries, and donuts. Any food that contains "hydrogenated oil" or "partially hydrogenated oil" likely contains trans fats, so just don't eat it. (Sure, having a cheat here and there that contains trans fats won't harm anything, but you definitely don't want to regularly eat them.)

- Get your fats from unsaturated fats such as olive oil, nuts, peanut oil, avocados, flax seed oil, safflower oil, sesame oil, or cottonseed oil. If a fat is liquid at room temperature, it's an unsaturated fat.

SODIUM

The average American's diet is so over-saturated with sodium it makes my head spin.

The Institute of Medicine recommends 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day as the adequate intake level for most adults. According to the CDC, the average American aged 2 and up eats *3,436 milligrams* of sodium per day.

Too much sodium in the body causes water retention (which gives you that puffy, soft look) and it can lead to high blood pressure and heart disease.

Frozen and canned foods are full of sodium, as are cured meats like bacon and sausage (one slice of bacon contains 1,000 *milligrams* of sodium!).

Whenever possible, I chose low- or no-sodium ingredients when I cook. When you need to add salt, I recommend sea salt or Himalayan rock salt (sounds like fancy BS, but it's actually great stuff) because it has many naturally occurring minerals, whereas run-of-the-mill table salt has been "chemically cleaned" to remove "impurities," which includes these vital elements.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You may find this chapter a bit hard to swallow (no pun intended). Some people have a really hard time giving up their unhealthy eating habits (sugar and junk food can be pretty addictive). There are several benefits to following my diet advice:

1. If this is a completely new way of eating for you, I guarantee you'll feel better than you have in a *long* time. You won't have energy highs and lows. You won't feel lethargic. You won't have that mental fogginess that comes with being stuffed full of unhealthy food.

2. You will appreciate "bad" food so much more when you only have it once or twice per week. You'd be surprised how much better a dessert tastes when you haven't had one in a week. (You may also be surprised that junk food that you loved in the past no longer tastes good.)

3. You will actually come to enjoy these healthy foods. I promise. Even if they don't taste too good to you at first, just groove in the routine, and soon you'll crave brown rice and fruit instead of doughnuts and bread. Your body will adapt.

Don't discount the importance of what I covered in this chapter. The types of proteins, carbs, and fats that you eat will not only determine your gains but will also dictate how you look. Eat poorly, and you'll look bloated and puffy. Eat well, and you'll look lean and hard. It's really that simple.

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HOW TO PLAN YOUR MEALS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR GAINS

Many people's meal plans are engineered for getting fat. They skip breakfast, eat a junk food lunch, come home famished, have a big dinner with some dessert, and then have a snack like chips or popcorn while watching TV at night.

In this chapter, I want to discuss the basics of how to structure your meals each day, whether your plan is to focus on building muscle or losing fat. Then, in the following chapter, you'll learn how to calculate exactly how much you should be eating each day based on your goals.

MEAL PROPORTIONS

I like to make breakfast my largest meal of the day, and my meals get progressively smaller as the day goes on. This is because your metabolism is at its natural peak in the morning and then slows down as night approaches.

Generally speaking, my breakfast usually contains about 30% of my total daily calories.

MACRONUTRIENT PLANNING

Protein

You should be eating protein every 3 – 5 hours. You never want to go more than 5 hours without eating protein, as studies have shown that the body's anabolic response to protein consumption lasts about that long. This means you'll need to eat protein 4 – 6 times per day, and enough each meal to meet your dietary targets.

Carbohydrates

Much of your daily carbohydrates should come before and after training, when your body needs them most. I eat about 10 – 15% of my daily carbs before training, and about 30 – 40% after, in my post-workout meal.

It's also important when cutting to not eat carbs within several hours of going to bed. This advice has been kicking around the health and fitness world for quite some time, but usually with the wrong explanation.

There's no scientific evidence that eating carbs at night or before bed will lead to gaining fat, but it can *hinder* fat loss. How?

The insulin created by the body to process and absorb carbs eaten stops the use of fat as an

energy source. Your body naturally burns the most fat while sleeping, and so going to sleep with elevated insulin levels interferes with fat loss.

Related to this is the fact that studies have indicated that the production and processing of insulin interferes with the production and processing of growth hormone, which has powerful fat-burning properties. Your body naturally produces the vast majority of its growth hormone while sleeping, so again, if your body is flushed with insulin when you go to sleep, your growth hormone production will suffer, which in turn robs you of its fat-burning and muscle-building benefits.

So, as a general rule, when you're cutting, don't eat any carbs within 4 – 5 hours of bedtime. You should only consume lean proteins after dinner. I follow this rule when bulking too, not because I'm worried about fat burning (you don't burn fat when bulking), but because I don't want to stunt my growth hormone production.

Fats

You can spread your fats throughout the day. I like to start my day with 1 – 2 tablespoons of Udo's oil (a great 3-6-9 blend), but you don't have to buy this if you don't want to. You can simply stick to the sources of healthy fat given earlier.

THE PRE-WORKOUT MEAL: 30 – 30 – 30

About 30 minutes before training, you want to eat about 30 grams of high-GI carbs and about 30 grams of fast-digesting protein (such as whey).

The carbs will not only give you energy to fuel your workout, they will trigger the release of insulin, which counteracts the effects of cortisol and, according to a study done at the University of Oklahoma, increases blood flow to the muscles and protein synthesis.

The protein will get amino acids into your blood stream, immediately available for repair as you start to break down the muscle fibers by lifting weights.

THE POST-WORKOUT MEAL

Many guys are surprised to learn how important eating a post-workout meal is.

Studies have universally shown that eating carbs and protein after intense weight training leads to greater development of lean mass, decreases in body fat, and overall improvements in body composition.

When you finish training, your body is in a highly anabolic state, and it will absorb glucose, glycogen, and amino acids at a higher rate than normal. However, if you waste this window and don't feed your body, you can actually halt muscle growth and hinder fat loss.

Therefore, it's vitally important to eat within an hour of finishing your weight training (but not cardio workouts, as they don't deplete glycogen levels like weight training), and to eat a substantial amount of carbs, and a moderate amount of protein.

For most guys, a post-workout meal includes about 80 grams of medium-to-high-GI carbs. This may sound like a lot, and it is, but your body needs them. (Don't worry—we will work out your exact numbers soon.)

PRE-SLEEP MEAL

A slow-digesting protein should be the last meal of the night, and should be consumed immediately before going to bed. I like egg protein powder or 0% fat Greek yogurt or low-fat cottage cheese, but casein is another common choice.

This last bit of protein is important because your body is about to fast for 6 – 8 hours, and when the protein you eat before bed is fully digested and utilized, your body will start breaking down muscle. Thus, you want 15 – 20 grams of a slow-digesting protein before bed so that you can minimize or eliminate catabolism.

IT'S TIME TO CHEAT!

Many people struggling with diets talk about "cheat days." The idea is that if you're good during the week, you can go buck wild on the weekends and somehow not gain fat. Well, unless you have a very fast metabolism, that's not how it works. If you follow a strict diet and exercise program, you can expect to lose 1 – 2 pounds per week. If you get too crazy, you can gain it right back over a weekend.

So don't think cheat DAYS, think cheat MEALS—meals where you eat more or less anything you want (and all other meals of the week follow your meal plan). When done once or twice per week, a cheat meal is not only satisfying, but it actually can *speed up* your metabolic rate. Scientists aren't sure why, but it might have to do with a similar factor of muscle growth: overload. By "overloading" your metabolism occasionally, you make it work extra hard, and it has to always be ready to handle a large influx of calories.

I would recommend, however, that you don't go too overboard with your cheat meals—don't eat 3,000 calories of junk food and desserts and think it won't do anything.

How many cheat meals you should eat per week depends on what you're trying to accomplish.

When you're bulking, two or three cheat meals per week is totally fine.

When you're cutting, you can have one cheat meal per week, and I recommend that you make it a "re-feed meal," which I'll explain in full in the next chapter.

EATING ON YOUR OFF DAYS

Don't worry about lowering your calories for your off days (days that you don't train on). While it might seem to make sense as you're burning less calories on those days, practically speaking, it won't make a difference if you reduce them or not.

The only change I make on off days is I don't drink my high-carb breakfast shake, which also

serves as my post-workout meal (I lift early in the morning). Instead, I usually have the same amount of calories and carbs with a hot cereal like oatmeal and a protein such as eggs, a shake, fat-free yogurt, and so forth.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Building a great body requires great eating habits, and you now know what that means: eating enough calories, protein, carbohydrates, and fats on the right eating schedule and drinking enough water, ensuring that your body has everything it needs to adapt to the intense training that you subject it to.

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YOUR *BIGGER LEANER STRONGER* DIET PLAN

In order to diet properly, you need to know how to determine how many calories to eat each day and how many of those calories should be from proteins, carbs, and fats.

Well, that's what we're going to cover in this chapter: how to calculate your exact diet requirements for cutting, bulking, and maintaining.

Cutting is when you adjust your diet and usually also add cardio to your training routine in order to maximize fat loss with the usual byproduct of minimal muscle growth.

Bulking is when you adjust your diet to maximize muscle gains with the usual byproduct of gaining some fat along the way. As a note, bulking does NOT mean eating everything under the sun, moon, and stars, which leads to excessive fat storage. This not only makes you look like a fat, bloated mess, but it actually hinders muscle gains.

Maintaining is when you adjust your diet to enable you to make slow muscle gains without the addition of any fat.

There are many formulas and methods out there for calculating caloric and macronutritional requirements. Some are based on the idea that you should eat based on your target weight, not where you currently are. While I've found these methods workable, they require that you know your body fat percentage, which can be a bit of problem. Hand-held electrical devices that claim to measure body fat percentage can be horribly inaccurate, as can scales that "measure" body fat levels. Taking measurements and entering them into an online body fat percentage calculator of some kind will give wildly inaccurate results in almost all cases.

Thus, the method for calculating your diet that I'm going to share is based on your current body weight and goal (cut, bulk, or maintain). It's very simple and workable.

In case you're interested in knowing your body fat percentage, most experts agree that hydrostatic, DEXA x-ray, and BodPod testing are the most accurate methods of determining body fat percentage. The downside, however, is inconvenience and cost.

Therefore, I recommend that you get a good fat caliper. When you learn how to test properly with this simple device, you will get very accurate measurements. I recommend a good, cheap caliper in the bonus report at the end of this book and on my website, www.buildhealthymuscle.com, along with other equipment such as supplements, gloves, shoes, and more.

DIETING FOR MAXIMUM MUSCLE GAINS

When you want to gain significant amounts of muscle (ten pounds or more), bulk until you've gained the size you want, and then cut to lose the fat. This is the fastest way to achieve the look you want.

What can turn guys off about this approach is the fat gained while bulking, but this is just part of the game. If you want to gain muscle as quickly as possible, you're going to gain some fat too, simply because it's going to require you to eat a surplus of calories each day (more than your body burns). The good news is that if you're bulking correctly, you won't gain too much fat, and you'll be able to lose it fairly quickly by properly cutting.

Many guys trying to both bulk and cut (build muscle and lose fat) make the mistake of not eating enough to grow quickly but eating too much to lose fat quickly, and then they wonder why they're not getting much bigger or leaner. It's because they're essentially eating to maintain, and the most you can ask for from a good maintenance diet is slow muscle and strength gains with little or no change in fat levels.

So, if you want to gain muscle as quickly as possible, follow a bulking diet and don't sweat the little bit of fat you gain. Once you cut and strip that fat off, you'll look awesome.

One other thing to keep in mind when bulking is that fat makes you look all-around bigger, so it often happens that guys bulk to a size where they feel satisfied, and then cut and find themselves disappointed with how much smaller they look afterwards.

My recommendation is to bulk to a size that's a little bigger than what you want and then cut. You should be happy with your final size if you do it this way.

Calculating Your Bulking Diet

Let's now look at how you work out a bulking diet. As you know, the primary factor in any diet is the total number of calories you consume. So, as you probably have guessed, a bulking diet requires that you eat a relatively large amount of calories every day.

Calculating your bulking diet is actually very easy. What you do is calculate a starting point and then adjust as needed. Here's how to determine your starting point:

- Eat 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight per day.
- Eat 2 grams of carbs per pound of body weight per day.
- Eat 1 gram of healthy fat per 3 pounds of body weight per day.

That's where you start. For a 150 lb male, it would look like this:

- 150 grams of protein per day
- 300 grams of carbs per day

- 50 grams of fat per day

This would be about 2,250 calories per day, which is the right place to start bulking for a 150 lb man.

As a note, some guys find that their bodies do better with less carbs and more fats. If you know or suspect this about your body, you can drop your carbs by 50 grams per day and increase your fats by about 20 grams per day to replace those calories.

Signs That You Have Your Diet Right or Wrong

Depending on whether you're new to weightlifting or experienced, you're expecting to gain anywhere from 0.5 – 2 pounds per week when bulking, with a minor, gradual increase in body fat.

You should be getting stronger almost every week, and you should notice little positive changes in the mirror and in how your clothes fit.

You should have good energy levels and should be sleeping well. If your energy levels are low and you're not sleeping well, you might be eating too little, or you might be eating too much of the wrong types of food (too many high-GI carbs or too much trans fats, for instance).

If you aren't gaining weight or strength or your energy levels are low after a couple of weeks of bulking, you should up your calories by about 300 per day for another week or two and see if that fixes it. The easiest way to add the calories is to eat about 70 more grams of carbs per day.

Most guys will find their "sweet spots" to be within 10 – 15% of the targets they originally calculated, but some have freak metabolisms that require as much as one thousand more calories per day. If you are naturally very lean despite eating a fair amount each day, chances are you're going to have to up your calories quite a bit to steadily gain weight.

You should also adjust your calories up by about 200 for every fifteen pounds that you gain. You can add these calories however you'd like (protein, carbs, or healthy fats).

General Rules for Bulking

There isn't much more to bulking than getting in enough calories, protein, carbs, and fats and following the basic rules of dieting that you've already learned (how often to eat, what types of foods you should eat, etc.).

When I'm bulking, I try to be within 200 calories of my daily target, and I err on the high side (better to be over your target than under).

You can have carbs after dinner as you're not trying to lose weight when bulking, although I generally don't as a rule because maximizing growth hormone production is a healthy habit.

Eat about 30% of your daily carbs in your post-workout meal. This is about 80 – 100 grams for most guys.

Enjoy a few cheat meals per week, but I recommend that you don't treat bulking as a license to go crazy with food and eat large amounts of junk. Sure, you can gain muscle like this, but you'll also gain unnecessary amounts of fat. If you stick to healthy, high-quality foods, you'll feel good, get bigger and stronger, and won't gain too much fat.

I always eat two servings of meat every day (lunch and dinner), and when I'm bulking, I eat at least four servings of red meat each week.

Figuring Out What to Actually Eat and When

The biggest mistake I see guys make when trying to bulk is not eating enough. They feel like they're eating a lot, but when they track their meals and actually look at the calories and macros, it's just not enough. This is easily remedied by planning out meals ahead of time so you know that you're eating the right amount.

Let's look at an actual example of this. This sample bulking meal plan is going to be for a 170lb man. For the purpose of this meal plan, I'm going to assume that he lifts when I do—at about 7:15 am.

I also include a few foods from my cookbook, T*he Shredded Chef*. If you want to check out the recipes, snag the free bonus report offered at the end of the book (or the cookbook).

Target Daily Protein: 170 grams

Target Daily Carbs: 340 grams

Target Daily Fats: 56 grams

Target Daily Calories: 2,544

Meal #1 (pre-workout 6:30 am)

1 scoop of protein powder in 1 cup of rice milk

1 small orange

286 calories

31 grams of protein

35 grams of carbs

3 grams of fat

Meal #2 (post-workout 8:30 am)

1 serving of Baked Raisin Oatmeal

1 banana

504 calories

38 grams of protein

69 grams of carbs

8 grams of fat

Meal #3 (12:30 pm)

4 oz of grilled chicken breast

2 servings of Cranberry Quinoa Salad

627 calories

42 grams of protein

90 grams of carbs

11 grams of fat

Meal #4 (3:30 pm)

1 Strawberry Banana Protein Bar

1 serving of Cranberry Quinoa Salad

1 apple

552 calories

30 grams of protein

86 grams of carbs

10 grams of fat

Meal #5 (6:30 pm)

1 serving of Beef Stroganoff

1 serving of Roasted Garlic Twice-Baked Potato

538 calories

36 grams of protein

48 grams of carbs

24 grams of fat

Meal #6 (10:30 pm)

20 grams of casein or egg protein

80 calories

20 grams of protein

0 grams of carbs

1 gram of fat

Summary

This meal plan provides 2,587 calories, 197 grams of protein, 328 grams of carbs, and 57 grams of fat, which is a great place to start bulking for our 170 lb friend.

Remember that the numbers you calculate are *targets*—you don't have to wrack your brains trying to juggle foods or ingredients so you meet them exactly or within a tiny margin.

One other thing to note is I didn't put a bunch of protein shakes in the meal plan, because I wanted to show you that it's really not necessary. As a general rule, try to get at least 50% of your daily protein from solid food. It makes a difference.

You'll also notice that I repeat the use of the Cranberry Quinoa Salad. I like to do this because it allows me to prepare batches of food for the week and divvy them up as needed. This is very practical, and I eat the same foods each meal for several days straight.

As time goes on, you'll get more and more familiar with the foods that you like to eat (and probably will settle on simple meals), and won't even need to work out a strict weekly plan. But for now, don't try to wing it—take 15 – 20 minutes at the end of each week and plan out the next week's food. Then go grocery shopping, cook it up, and you're good to go.

DIETING FOR MAXIMUM FAT LOSS

Losing fat requires that you reduce your daily caloric intake, and as you'll see, most of the calories you cut from your diet come from reducing your carbs.

Cutting, of course, requires more precision than bulking as you're looking to keep your calories at a very specific level that will allow you to steadily lose fat while maintaining strength and muscle mass. If you eat a bit too much every day, you'll hinder your fat loss, and if you eat a bit too little, you'll risk losing muscle.

In case you've never done it before, I want to warn you that the first week or two of transitioning from a bulk to a cut is a bit rough. You're going to be hungry, and you're going to crave carbs. It's just the way it is. Stay strong, however, and you'll find it much easier from week two on. By week four or five, you won't even mind it anymore.

Calculating Your Cutting Diet

Like bulking, you will first calculate a starting point and then adjust as needed. You've nailed it when you lose 1 – 2 pounds per week with little or no strength loss. If you're losing a lot of strength, you're also losing muscle (which means your calories are too low or you're allowing too much time to pass between meals).

Here's how to calculate your starting point:

- Eat 1.2 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day.

- Eat 1 gram of carbs per pound of body weight per day.

- Eat 1 gram of healthy fats per 5 pounds of body weight per day.

That's where you start. For a 200 lb male, it would look like this:

- 240 grams of protein per day

- 200 grams of carbs per day

- 40 grams of fat per day

This would be about 2,120 calories per day, which is a good starting point for a 200 lb guy looking to lose weight.

The Danger of Hidden Calories

A huge, killer diet trap that many people fall into is they eat a lot of "hidden calories" throughout the day and then wonder why they aren't losing weight. Hidden calories are those that you don't realize are there, such as the following:

- The two tablespoons of olive oil used to cook your chicken breast (240 calories)

- The two tablespoons of mayonnaise in your homemade chicken salad (200 calories)

- The three cubes of feta cheese on your salad (140 calories)

- The three tablespoons of cream in your coffee (80 calories)

- The two pats of butter with your toast (70 calories)

Hidden calories are the number one reason why people don't get results from properly calculated and planned diets. They just eat more than they're supposed to, usually by eating out at restaurants, ordering what they think are low-calorie menu items.

When you're cutting, you'll be running on a 500 – 600 calorie deficit every day, so as you can see, there's little margin for error.

If you eat 400 hidden calories and thus only really have a 100 – 200 calorie deficit at the end of the day, you won't effectively lose weight. It's that simple. It might seem paranoid to be careful about how many tablespoons of ketchup you have in a day, but if you watch your calories that closely when cutting, you are *guaranteed* to get results. Your body WILL get ripped.

The best way to avoid hidden calories is to prepare your food yourself, so you know exactly what went into it (for most this just means preparing a lunch to bring to the office, as breakfast and

dinner are usually eaten at home).

Signs That You Have Your Diet Right or Wrong

After 2 – 3 weeks of sticking to your cutting diet, you should assess how it's going. Weight loss isn't the only criterion to consider when deciding if your diet is right or wrong, however.

You should judge your progress based on the following criteria:

Your weight (did it go down, up, or stay the same?)

Your clothes (do they feel looser, tighter, or the same?)

The mirror (do you look thinner, fatter, or the same?)

Your energy levels (do you feel energized, tired, or somewhere in between?)

Your strength (is it going up, down, or staying about the same?)

Your sleep (are you exhausted by the end of the night, do you have trouble winding down, or has nothing changed?)

Let's talk about each point briefly.

Weight

If your weight is going up, you're eating too much. Even if you're new to weight lifting and thus will be building muscle, it won't be more than the 1 – 2 pounds of fat per week that you should be losing.

If your weight is the same after several weeks of dieting, you may be eating too much, but you may just be building muscle to replace the weight of the fat lost (and you'll know it by your clothing and mirror, which we're going to talk about).

If your weight is going down, then that's a good sign, although there are other factors to consider to ensure you're not eating too little, which brings other problems (you'll see in a minute).

Your Clothes

If your jeans feel a bit looser and your tops a big snugger in the shoulders, that's a good sign. If your weight also hasn't changed, then you should count yourself lucky—you've built muscle and lost fat!

Your Mirror

Although it can be tough to see changes in our bodies due to seeing them every day, you should definitely notice a difference after several weeks of cutting. You should look less puffy and visibly

leaner.

If you don't, chances are your weight hasn't changed either, or has gone up, and your jeans aren't feeling looser. This is a clear sign that you're still eating too much.

If you look thinner in the mirror and your jeans are looser, yet your weight hasn't changed, then you've built muscle to replace—on the scale—the fat you lost, so carry on.

Your Energy Levels

You should never feel starved and running on empty when dieting to lose weight. Depending on how you ate before starting the weight loss process, you may feel a little hungry for the first week or two, but after that, you should feel comfortable throughout the day.

In terms of energy, we all have high- and low-energy days, but if you're having more lows than usual, then chances are you're not eating enough.

Your Strength

If you're new to weight training and start with cutting, your strength should go up week after week. If it isn't, this can be caused by under-eating, by not training properly, or by not resting properly.

If you're an experienced weight lifter, it's not uncommon for a minor loss in strength due to cutting carbs, but it shouldn't be more than 5% or so. If your strength drops by 10% or more, chances are you're under-eating.

Sleep

If you're dead tired by bed time, that's not necessarily a bad sign. This is common when people start training correctly.

What's important, however, is that you sleep long and deeply. If your heart is beating quickly at night and you're anxious, tossing and turning in bed, and if you wake up more often at night, you might be overtraining, or under-eating.

Summary

If, based on the above criteria, you suspect you're eating too much, all you need to do is cut your calories by 200 per day and see if that fixes it within the next two weeks. To cut these calories, simply cut your carbs by 50 grams per day. Don't eat less protein or fats.

If you suspect you're eating too little, add 200 calories in carbs per day and see if this stabilizes your strength (it should).

As a note, you should adjust your calories down by about 200 for every 15 pounds that you lose. You should subtract these calories by reducing carbs (reduce by 50 grams per day).

General Rules for Cutting

Unlike bulking, cutting requires that you be very precise with how much you eat. You want to walk a fine line of running at enough of a calorie deficit to lose fat but not dropping too low, which would cause muscle and strength loss.

When I'm cutting, I try to be within 50 – 100 calories of my target. If I'm a little higher, so be it. If I'm a little lower, that's okay too. It really just depends on what types of foods I feel like eating. Then I see how my body responds and adjust as needed.

Eat 30 – 40% of your daily carbs in your post-workout meal. Make sure to have the rest eaten by the end of dinner. If you train at night, what I've found workable is cutting my normal post-workout carbs in half, and spreading the remaining half throughout the day.

For instance, if my post-workout meal was supposed to include 80 grams of carbs, I'd do 40 grams after training, and eat the remaining 40 grams earlier in the day. While this still may interfere with weight loss to some degree, it's much worse to not eat any carbs after training, so don't sweat it. You should have no trouble losing weight as long as you get everything else right.

Stick to lean white-meat proteins such as chicken, fish, turkey, and eggs. When I'm cutting, I do no more than 1 – 2 servings of red meat per week.

Avoid baked goods and pasta. Breads and pastas tend to make you retain water and look puffy.

Cheating When Cutting

There's a great method of cheating when cutting that not only satisfies your cravings, but actually helps preserve your muscle and maintain your strength. It's known as "re-feeding."

The theory is simple: When you start running your body on a caloric deficit, evolution has programmed it to adjust in several ways to ensure it won't die of starvation (an over-reaction of course, but old habits die hard).

Metabolism slows down, hunger increases, and the sacrifice of muscle for energy begins. Production of the thyroid hormone T3, which works together with T4 to regulate metabolism, drops, and cortisol stays in your system longer (interfering with muscle synthesis). Testosterone production also drops.

On top of all of that, intense weightlifting five days per week thoroughly depletes glycogen levels in the muscles, and low glycogen levels means less strength and muscle growth.

This is basically a nightmare scenario for anyone who is trying to get shredded and keep their size. So, what can you do about it? It's simple, actually.

Plan one day per week where you eat double your normal amount of carbs. This will replenish glycogen stores in the muscles and kick the thyroid into gear. I recommend you plan it on a day which is followed by a training day. Many guys plan it for the day before they train their lagging muscle

group(s) because the boost in carbs results in higher energy in the gym.

You can pack the extra carbs into one carb-laden meal if you want—one where you eat .5 – 1 gram of carbs per pound of bodyweight—or you can spread it out over two or three meals.

I like to eat about 100 grams of carbs for breakfast (pancakes!), and another 100 or so at lunch (usually whole-wheat pasta), and then add one extra piece of fruit in my afternoon snack. That bumps me up to about 400 grams of carbs for the day, which is a perfect re-feed.

A proper re-feed not only won't cause any fat storage, but will also prevent your body from getting sucked into the dwindling spiral I explained earlier.

If you'd rather not re-feed, that's okay too. You can simply do one cheat meal per week where you eat more than you normally would. I don't recommend gorging on a few thousand calories, but don't be afraid to enjoy it, either. Go out with friends, eat some pasta, have some dessert, and don't feel guilty. You've earned it.

Figuring Out What to Actually Eat and When

You work out your meals when cutting just as you do when bulking, but as you'll quickly see, you're much more limited in what you can eat. It's very important that you work out exact meals and stick to them because, as you know, all it takes to kill your fat loss is a few hundred hidden calories per day.

Let's work out a daily meal plan for a 200 lb man that is going to cut, and to make it trickier, we'll assume that he's working out right after work (before dinner). Once again, I include recipes from my cookbook, which you can also get in the free bonus report offered at the end of this book.

Target Daily Protein: 240 grams

Target Daily Carbs: 200 grams

Target Daily Fats: 40 grams

Target Daily Calories: 2,120

Meal #1 (8:15 am)

Zucchini Frittata

1 cup of orange juice

1 tablespoon of 3-6-9 oil blend

480 calories

31 grams of protein

34 grams of carbs

23 grams of fat

Meal #2 (10:30 am)

1 cup of low-fat cottage cheese

1 medium orange

265 calories

30 grams of protein

16 grams of carbs

4 grams of fat

Meal #3 (12:30 pm)

1 serving of Indian Curry Chicken

1 serving of Brown Rice Pilaf

443 calories

49 grams of protein

45 grams of carbs

6 grams of fat

Meal #4 (3:30 pm)

1 scoop of protein powder in water

1 medium orange

190 calories

30 grams of protein

16 grams of carbs

Nominal amount of fat

Meal #5 (pre-workout 5:30 pm)

1 scoop of protein powder in 1 cup of rice milk

243 calories

30 grams of protein

24 grams of carbs

3 grams of fat

Meal #6 (post-workout 7:00 pm)

Kiwi-Banana-Mango Monster Shake

500 calories

48 grams of protein

70 grams of carbs

4 grams of fat

Meal #7 (10:30 pm)

20 grams of casein or egg protein

80 calories

20 grams of protein

0 grams of carbs

1 gram of fat

Summary

This meal plan provides 2,201 calories, 238 grams of protein, 205 grams of carbs, and 41 grams of fat, which is a perfect place for a 200 lb man to start cutting.

DIETING TO MAINTAIN

I don't recommend bothering with any kind of maintenance diet until you're basically happy with where your body is. That means you've attained the size and leanness you want, and you're looking to make slow and steady muscle and strength gains without gaining any fat. Until you've reached this point, I really recommend that you purely bulk and cut until you're satisfied with your look.

Now, don't think of "maintaining" as "staying the same." I think you should always have the goal of getting at least a little stronger every month, and most guys always want to get a little bigger in certain areas of their body. Always set goals and be looking to improve. Don't just try to stay the same because things tend to either get better or get worse.

Calculating Your Maintenance Diet

Here's how you determine your starting point:

- Eat 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight per day.
- Eat 1.5 grams of carbs per pound of body weight per day.
- Eat 1 gram of healthy fats per 4 pounds of body weight per day.

That's where you start. For a 200 lb male, it would look like this:

- 200 grams of protein per day
- 300 grams of carbs per day
- 50 grams of fat per day

That's about 2,500 calories per day, which should work for making slow, steady muscle and strength gains without any fat added along the way. When maintaining, I like to see about 1 – 2 pounds of weight gain per month.

General Rules for Maintaining

You should create a daily meal plan and stick to it each day. If you're 50 – 100 calories over your target, don't sweat it.

You can plan in a variety of course, but make sure that you know exactly what's going into your body each day.

You can still cheat once or twice per week, and you don't have to worry about re-feeding as your carbs are high enough.

You can have carbs at night as you're not trying to lose weight when maintaining, although I generally don't as a rule because maximizing growth hormone production is a healthy habit.

Eat about 30% of your daily carbs in your post-workout meal.

Signs That You Have Your Diet Right or Wrong

When maintaining, your weight is less of an indicator of progress than when cutting. You can lose a little fat and build a little muscle each week, and your weight can stay more or less the same. Your weight can go up if you build a little muscle but don't lose any fat, and it can go down if you lose a little fat or muscle due to not eating enough.

You should be getting a little stronger each week, and you should notice little positive changes in the mirror and in how your clothes fit. If, after several weeks of following your maintenance diet, your jeans are getting tighter and you look flabbier, then you're eating too much.

You should have good energy levels and should be sleeping well. If your energy levels are low and you're not sleeping well, you might be eating too little, or you might be eating too much of the wrong types of food (too many high-GI carbs or too much trans fats, for instance).

If you suspect you're eating too much, cut 200 calories from your daily target by reducing your carbs by 50 grams per day, and see if that fixes it after a couple of weeks of assessment. If it doesn't cut further.

If you suspect you're not eating enough, add 200 calories per day by bumping your carbs or fats up (remember, carbs have 4 calories per gram, and fats have 9).

BODY COMPOSITION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BODY WEIGHT

I've had guys contact me a bit confused by their progress. They're getting bigger, leaner, and stronger, but their weight is staying the same or even going down. They're usually afraid that something is wrong. Well, nothing is.

Unless they're starting out very lean (10% body fat or under), it's very common for guys to start on this program and actually build muscle while losing fat. On the scale, they are the "same," but in the gym and in the mirror, they're clearly progressing.

A great example of this is a friend of mine that has been training with me for about eight months now. When he started, he was just over 220 lbs and about 23% body fat. Within the first three months of training, his strength had nearly doubled across the board, and he had muscle to show for the first time in his life...but he was twenty pounds lighter than when he started. This was all fat loss—his body fat tested at around 14%.

Now, five months later, he has gained twenty pounds of muscle, putting him back at the same weight as when he started, but his body composition is completely different, and people can't believe the transformation.

So if you're not already lean and fit, don't fret if your weight isn't changing but your strength is going up, your muscles are visually growing, and you're losing fat. Listen to the scale, but let your mirror and weights have the final say.

THE BOTTOM LINE

I know it's a lot to take it all at once, but I have good news. You've just learned everything you'll ever need to know about dieting. You'll never struggle with building muscle or losing fat again if you just follow what you've read in the last few chapters.

Let's now tackle training and look at how to get the most out of our time in the gym each day.

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THE *BIGGER LEANER STRONGER* TRAINING FORMULA

Many training programs touted in the magazines and infomercials are the same. They want you to use a bunch of machines and maybe some light free weights, and do a bunch of reps. The free weight exercises usually rely on dumbbells, and usually isolate muscles like the biceps, triceps, and shoulders.

While this type of training is better than nothing, there are much more effective ways to spend your time and energy.

Ironically, machines became a staple of gyms not because they're particularly effective, but they're inviting. They don't look nearly as intimidating as hunks and bars of iron. They're easier to manipulate and you have basically no risk of injury.

While some machines are useful, such as the cable setup, the majority are inferior to dumbbell and barbell exercises in terms of producing bigger, stronger muscles. Therefore, the *Bigger Leaner Stronger* program will focus on free weights, and not on machines.

When guys do use free weights, they usually do isolation exercises. This type of workout comes from the world of bodybuilding, in which guys spend hours in the gym each day sculpting each muscle fiber in their bodies for competitive shows. There are two reasons why this style of training is just horrible for the average guy.

First, every professional bodybuilder is on steroids. Yes, every single one, regardless of what they say. And when you're on steroids, you train just as I described above—you spend hours in the gym doing a million sets because you just grow, grow, grow and simply can't overtrain, and you stick to the 10 – 12 rep range because you don't want to go too heavy and risk injury to a joint, tendon, or ligament.

Second, the average guy needs to build a strong overall foundation of muscle, not gain an extra half inch on his rear delt or extend his lat an inch lower down his torso. When you see big, ripped guys focusing mainly on machines and isolation exercises, a) they're probably on drugs, and b) they're not trying to increase overall size as they have a solid foundation, but instead, they're trying to increase the size of very specific parts of their physique. In most cases, they train certain body parts very lightly, or not at all, to improve proportions.

So, that style of training is just not for you unless you're already huge. Instead, you need to do what the bodybuilders did to build that foundation in the first place—you need to do heavy, compound exercises.

That's why the *Bigger Leaner Stronger* program is built around compound exercises—exercises

like the Squat, Deadlift, Military Press, Bench Press, and many others. These are the exercises that give you the most bang for your buck—the most total-body strengthening and conditioning for the time and effort.

The *Bigger Leaner Stronger* weight training method follows a formula that looks like this:

1 – 2 | 4 – 6 | 6 – 9 | 2 – 3 | 45 – 60 | 5 – 7 | 8 – 10

No, that isn't a secret code that you have to break. Let's go through this formula one piece at a time.

1 – 2

TRAIN 1-2 MUSCLE GROUPS PER DAY

In order to achieve maximum overload and muscle stimulation, you will be training one or two muscle groups per workout (per day). You also won't be training two major muscle groups on the same day (such as back and chest, shoulders and legs)—your workouts will be one of three types: a workout that trains only one major muscle group (such as chest or legs), a workout that trains one major group and one minor group (such as back and abs), or a workout that trains two minor groups (such as biceps and triceps).

Bigger Leaner Stronger is laid out like this for a couple of reasons. First, it's simply not possible to fully train two major muscle groups in one workout that is under an hour (and as you've learned, you want your lifting sessions to be around 30 – 45 minutes). The second reason is a psychological one. By training only one major muscle group per day, you will be able to give it 100% focus and intensity and train it hard.

If you've ever slogged through a workout that had you blast two major muscle groups, you know how hard it gets. Well, that overall body fatigue saps your energy and strength, causing you to lift less across the board than you would be able to if you weren't drained.

4 – 6

DO SETS OF 4 - 6 REPS FOR NEARLY ALL EXERCISES

In order to achieve maximum muscle growth, you will be doing 4 – 6 repetitions per set on virtually *all exercises* (the only exception to this is when training abs and calves, for which I recommend using weight that allows you to do 10 – 12 reps).

This is critically important and is the heart of *Bigger Leaner Stronger*'s training routine.

What is meant by doing 4 – 6 reps? It means that you will use weights that are light enough to allow you to get at least 4 reps, but heavy enough to prevent you from doing more than 6 reps. This means handling weights that are 80 – 85% of your 1RM, or one-rep-max (the weight that you can only do one rep with). If you find you can't do at least 4 reps on an exercise, the weight is too heavy;

conversely, if you find you can do more than 6 reps, the weight is too light.

When you can do a set of 6 reps with perfect form, you should add weight to your next set—5 pounds for dumbbell exercises, and 10 pounds for barbell exercises. This should allow you to do 4 reps on your next set, and you build your strength from there over the next few weeks. If adding 10 pounds is too much (if you can't get at least 4 reps on your next set), drop it to a 5-pound increase.

Now, before I continue, I want to back this up with a little bit of science, as optimal rep ranges for hypertrophy are still a subject of heated debate rather than certainty.

A massive review paper was published in 2007 by Goteborg University, and it contained two key findings for our purposes:

> 1. Training with weights between 70 – 85% of 1RM produced maximum hypertrophy in subjects, although lower and higher loads also produced marked results.
>
> 2. A moderate training volume of 30 – 60 reps per workout produced maximum hypertrophy in subjects. 30 reps was found ideal when using weights in the 70 – 85% of 1RM range, and as the load decreased, the optimal number of reps increased.

The American College of Sports Medicine published a paper in 2002 that, based on the study of hundreds of subjects, concluded that training with weights that allowed no more than 5 – 6 reps is most effective for increasing strength.

Another big advantage of training with heavy weights is the fact that they stimulate the most growth hormone and testosterone production. A Finnish study (and others) found that using a weight that allows for only 5 – 6 reps is optimal for achieving the maximum testosterone and growth hormone release while training. (The types of exercises you do also affect how much hormones are released. Studies have shown that compound exercises increase testosterone more than isolation exercises.)

Yet another reason to train heavy is the fact that your sets are short, which allows you to fully concentrate and focus your energy on the lift. It's much easier to mentally and physically give it your all when you do 4 – 6 reps than when you do 10 – 12.

Now, some people might disagree with doing 4 – 6 reps, and they might refer to various charts and studies that indicate that slightly higher rep ranges (such as 6 – 8 or 8 – 10) are actually best for muscle growth.

Don't worry. As I've said, this is a hotly contested subject, and there's no universally accepted answer just yet as to what is truly the most effective rep range for hypertrophy, and there probably never will be. But know this: all studies agree training with 70 – 85% of your 1RM works. It builds muscle and strength, and it significantly increases anabolic hormone production.

My own experience and the experiences of many people I've trained and trained with are also worth mentioning. I've been training for nearly a decade now and have seen and tried just about every training method you can imagine (and some were pretty strange), and I've yet to find a more effective way to train than what I'm teaching here.

I can *guarantee* you that if you just follow the routine laid out in this book, you will make startling strength and size gains.

You won't be doing burn-out sets, supersets, drop sets, or anything else but controlled, heavy sets. Leave the light weight, muscle confusion routines to the amateurs, and it will only be a matter of time before they come to you, baffled how you're gaining so much by doing "so little."

6 – 9

DO 6 – 9 WORKING SETS PER MUSCLE GROUP

Your workouts will consist of 6 – 9 "working" sets per muscle group trained. A working set is your heavy, 4 – 6 rep, muscle-building set, as opposed to a warm-up set, which we'll soon go over. Regardless of which exercises you do, you'll never do more than 6 – 9 sets for any individual muscle group (and to clarify, you will be doing 9 working sets for all muscle groups but arms, for which you will do 6 sets for biceps, and 6 for triceps).

This might be a shock to some. All too often I see guys pounding away on a muscle group, doing 15, 20, or even 25 sets of heavy lifting. This is overtraining, and it's not only a huge waste of time but a huge waste of *muscle*—both potential and existing. The body can't effectively repair that much damage to the muscle fibers, and the result can actually be *shrinkage*.

Just as 4 – 6 reps is the sweet spot for set volume, 9 working sets is the sweet spot for total training volume for the major muscle groups given the weights you'll be handling, and I've found 6 plenty for biceps and triceps as they get hit pretty hard in exercises like the Deadlift, Bench Press, and Military Press. By training this way, you'll not only fully and deeply stimulate the muscles you're training, but you can keep your workouts in the ideal time frame of 45 – 60 minutes.

If you're having a hard time believing that you can get bigger and stronger gains by working out less than just about everyone else, don't worry—it won't require any leap of faith. Suspend your disbelief for just a few weeks, and the results will speak for themselves.

2 – 3

REST 2 – 3 MINUTES IN BETWEEN SETS

When you lift weights, many physiological activities take place to enable you to perform the exercise. For a muscle to contract, it requires cellular energy, oxygen, certain chemical reactions, and many other molecular processes. As you perform each rep, you deplete your muscles' capacity to contract forcefully.

When you lift heavy weights, you push your muscles to their full contraction capacity; therefore, sufficient recovery time in between sets is what allows you to repeat this process enough to achieve the optimum amount of muscle overload to stimulate and force new growth. Basically, the whole point of resting between a set is to prepare your muscles to lift maximum weight in the next set.

The in-between-set recovery period should last about 2 – 3 minutes. This amount of time allows your muscles to restore their maximum lifting potentials by replenishing energy stores and flushing out unwanted chemical byproducts of the last set. Both studies cited earlier regarding the 4 – 6 rep range found that 2 – 3 minutes of rest in between sets was ideal when handling those weight loads.

Some days you'll feel energized and quicker on recovery, and other days you'll feel a bit slower. The important point is that you give yourself enough time in between sets to be able to lift the maximum amount of weight in each set. If 2 minutes is all you need, so be it; if you need the full 3 minutes or even a minute longer, that's okay too.

Don't, however, drag out rest times to 5 or 6 minutes or beyond. This drags out the whole workout and kills intensity. The test isn't whether you WANT to do the next set or not; it's whether your body's heart rate has come down since the last set and you feel like you have the energy to do another set.

45 – 60

TRAIN FOR 45 – 60 MINUTES

If your workouts are going longer than an hour, something is wrong. You should be able to finish every *Bigger Leaner Stronger* workout in about 45 minutes, and they should never take longer than an hour. (Some days you need to rest a bit longer, which adds time, as does doing abs.)

The usual reasons why people's workouts pass into the 90+ minute range are they drag out their rest times and/or do a ton of sets.

Long workouts are harmful in a couple of ways. First, it's hard to maintain mental and physical intensity for an hour and a half (especially when you're goofing off for 5 minutes in between sets). Second, your "anabolic window" closes at about 45 minutes of intense weight training, meaning that your testosterone and growth hormone levels begin to drop and your cortisol levels continue to rise. Pushing far beyond that can actually lead to overtraining and catabolism. In order to maintain anabolism, you want to end your training within that window and eat your post-workout meal.

Another benefit of shorter workouts is the simple fact that it's nice to not have to spend too much time in the gym every day. Pretty much anyone can figure out how to take an hour or so out of 3 – 5 days of each week to transform their body.

5 – 7

TRAIN EACH MUSCLE GROUP ONCE EVERY 5 – 7 DAYS

The amount of time you give a muscle group to rest before training it again plays a vital role in muscle growth (or lack thereof).

Recovery is what makes or breaks all of the above work to get you the body you want. If you don't allow your body to fully recover from a workout before you subject the same muscles to overload again, it doesn't matter how strictly you follow your diet or this training protocol—you will make minimal gains. If you continue too long like this, you'll get weaker and smaller, your energy levels will drop along with your appetite, and you'll lose all motivation for training.

As you know, it takes the body 2 – 5 days to fully repair muscles after weight training. The *Bigger Leaner Stronger* workouts are quite intense and the workout volume is moderate ("volume" refers to the total sets done per workout), which is why I want each muscle group to get plenty of rest before being trained again. It's not worth risking overtraining to try to sneak in an extra chest workout each week.

8 – 10

TAKE A WEEK OFF TRAINING EVERY 8 – 10 WEEKS

Lifting like this can be brutal at first. It's heavy. It's intense. Your muscles will ache. Your joints will have to adapt. But, your body is going to kick its muscle growth into overdrive.

Also, studies have shown that it takes 7 – 14 for the central nervous system to fully recover from the stresses of weight lifting. As you'll be training 3 – 5 days per week, your CNS will get progressively overloaded, and will need a complete rest periodically.

Taking a week off training every couple of months is actually an important part of overall recuperation and recovery. After 8 – 10 weeks of heavy pounding, your body needs a lull to fully recover, and you'll actually feel this physically (come week 8 or 9, don't be surprised if you feel low on energy, kind of weak, disinterested in training—all symptoms of overtraining coming on).

Many guys have a fear that they are going to shrink or get weaker in this time off, but this simply isn't the case. To the contrary, if you eat correctly during your week off, your body can actually go into a hyper-anabolic state, and you can come back bigger and stronger.

Another important point of your week off is that you don't want to do any strenuous physical activity during the week (no weightlifting, no strenuous cardio). You don't have to be a slug, but you don't want to give your body any unnecessary stresses to deal with.

Now, if after your week off, you notice that you come back feeling lethargic and weaker, then I recommend that you try what I do: a "De-load Week."

For the longest time, I completely rested for one week every couple of months or so, but my body seemed to not like it. I rarely would come back stronger, whereas my friends would. What I do now works much better.

I come to the gym each day and instead of doing my normal workouts of 9 heavy sets, I do 6 light sets with 40 – 50% of my normal weight, and I never go to failure. I do 8 – 10 reps each set, which gives a bit of a pump, and nothing more. Remember that your CNS needs time to rebalance itself, so you don't want to put your body under any serious stress.

Studies have shown that increased blood flow (and nutrients) to the muscles helps improve recovery and protein synthesis, which is all I'm looking to accomplish.

For the first 6 – 9 months of being on this program, I recommend that you try weeks of complete rest. If you definitely don't like how your body feels after trying a few full rest weeks, or if you come back weaker, then try the "De-load Week." I think you'll like it.

WHERE'S MY PUMP!?

If you're relatively new to weight training, or if you're used to high-rep, big-pump training, I just want to let you know that lower-rep, heavy training is quite different.

Don't be surprised if, for the first several weeks, you get noticeably stronger each week, but your muscles don't feel like they're being worked as much due to you getting a lot less pump than you're used to. Well, this style does give you less of a pump than doing a bunch of reps, but remember, pump doesn't mean growth. Overload means growth, and the only way to effectively overload your muscles is to lift progressively heavier weights.

So if your pecs aren't feeling like balloons ready to pop and your lats aren't exploding after your workouts, don't worry. As long as your form for each exercise is perfect and you're making sure the weights are heavy enough to allow no more than 6 reps, you're doing it right.

As long as you keep hitting the weights hard, your muscles will grow, and you will start seeing a difference. As your muscles grow, you'll get more and more of a pump from training heavy. And better yet, you'll be one of the rare guys that can look great without any pump at all because you have a true foundation of solid lean mass, not small muscles that need to fill up with blood to look like anything.

REP TIMING

"Rep timing" refers to the speed at which you lower and raise the weights.

The rep timing I recommend is known as a "2-1-2" timing. This means the first part of the rep should take about two seconds, then there should be a one-second pause, followed by the final portion of the rep, which should take about two seconds.

For example, if we apply this to the Bench Press, it means we are to lower the bar to our chest in two seconds, pause for one, and raise it in two.

CARDIO

A lot of bodybuilder types bash cardio simply because they don't like doing it. I know because I

used to be one of them.

The reality is, however, that cardio is not only an important part of losing fat, but of building muscle, too. I know that might be hard to believe, but let me explain.

A study conducted by the University of Wisconsin separated thirty untrained men into two groups. The first group followed a weight training program three days per week, while the second group did the same, plus fifty minutes of cycling.

After ten weeks of this, it was found that the cycling not only didn't impair muscle growth or strength gains, the men that cycled in addition to training with weights actually experienced more thigh growth than the other group.

Another study conducted by the University of Calgary found that cardio training decreases myostatin levels, which is a protein that limits muscle growth.

The bottom line is cardio, when done correctly, actually helps you build muscle, and it should be a regular part of your exercise routine, whether you're bulking, cutting, or maintaining.

If it's done incorrectly, however, it can hinder your muscle growth...

The Worst Cardio Mistakes You Can Make

The worst cardio mistakes I see guys make is doing cardio right before or after lifting. These mistakes can seriously hinder muscle and strength gains. Why?

Researchers from RMIT University worked with well-trained athletes in 2009 and found that "combining resistance exercise and cardio in the same session may disrupt genes for anabolism." In laymen's terms, they found that combining endurance and resistance training sends "mixed signals" to the muscles.

Cardio before the resistance training suppressed anabolic hormones such as IGF-1 and MGF, and cardio after resistance training increased muscle tissue breakdown.

Separate to the study are two other factors to consider. Cardio before weightlifting saps your energy and makes it much harder to train heavy, and cardio after weightlifting further postpones your post-workout nutrition, which further accelerates catabolism.

So, how do you do it right?

The 3 Commandments of Cardio

Whether you're doing cardio for the health benefits, because you like it, or to help with losing fat, here's how you prevent it from getting in the way of your muscle gains.

1. Do cardio 3 – 5 times per week based on your goals.

If you're bulking, I recommend 3 days of cardio per week. Studies have shown this to be enough to improve muscle growth, and it will also minimize fat storage.

Most guys find cardio necessary in order to get into the "super lean" category (8% and under) because you can only cut calories so much before you lose strength and muscle. I have to do cardio to get below 10%, for example, because I simply can't cut my calories any further without feeling miserable.

Some guys, however, don't need to bother. They simply regulate their calories and get as lean as they want. This really is just a matter of genetics and individual physiology. You'll find out which category you fall into when you actually cut, but you should plan on doing cardio 3 – 5 times per week to facilitate your fat loss.

2. Do high-intensity interval training (HIIT) cardio for 20 – 30 minutes per session.

Long, low-intensity cardio sessions tend to negatively impact muscle growth and burn relatively few calories, thus rendering them ineffective in helping with fat loss.

Studies such as those conducted by Laval University, East Tennessee State University, Baylor College of Medicine, and Florida State University have shown that shorter, high-intensity sessions, however, not only cause less muscle breakdown than low-intensity, steady-state cardio, but they burn more calories and stimulate more fat loss.

Therefore, I recommend doing HIIT for all cardio, and keeping your sessions between 20 – 30 minutes long. Here's how it works:

- You start your workout with 2 – 3 minutes of low-intensity warm-up.
- You then go all-out, as fast as possible, for 1 minute.
- You then slow it down to a low-intensity recovery period for about 1 minute.
- You repeat this cycle of all-out and recovery for 20 – 30 minutes.
- You take the last 2 – 3 minutes to cool down at a low intensity.

You can apply the HIIT style to any type of cardio that you would normally do. You can head outside and walk and sprint, or you can hop on the elliptical trainer or recumbent bike to get it done.

3. Separate your weights and cardio sessions by several hours.

You already know why you need to separate your cardio and weight training sessions, but unfortunately the study didn't include a recommendation as to how much time you should put in between them.

I've tried many different intervals and found that a minimum of 2 – 3 hours seems to be best.

Theoretically speaking, the longer you wait is probably better. I currently put about 14 hours in between my weights and cardio because I lift early in the morning and do cardio around 9:30 pm.

LIFTING HEAVY WHEN CUTTING

Probably the worst training advice I hear that's given to guys who are trying to get lean is to train with light weights in order to get "really cut." This is 100% wrong. Lighter weights don't help burn more fat than heavier weights. They don't "really bring out the striations." They don't make you vascular. They're just a waste of time, really.

Training heavy is ESPECIALLY important when you're cutting because that's how you're going to preserve your muscle—you're going to force your body to maintain its muscle mass by continuing to overload it.

So train hard and keep trying to go up in strength. Most guys experience an initial drop in strength when they switch from a bulk to a cut, but I've always managed to build my strength back up and even higher as I cut.

THE BOTTOM LINE

These are the core fundamentals of the *Bigger Leaner Stronger* training program. Chances are that this is a new approach to lifting for you, and if that's the case, you should be excited.

Soon you're going to be enjoying *explosive* muscle growth by doing relatively short, stimulating workouts that get the kind of results other guys can only dream about.

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MEET YOUR MAKERS: THREE LIFTS THAT BUILD GREAT BODIES

Most guys train with improper form.

They'll stop their Bench Presses six inches or more above their chest and say that it's "better for their shoulders." They'll load up a bunch of plates and squat down a foot or two and stand back up, because they "don't want to stress their knees." They'll hunch their back when doing Deadlifts so they can "really go heavy," and heavily arch their lower back at the top to "really get a squeeze."

Well, not only does improper form stunt gains, it opens the door to injury. Heavy, half-reps on the Bench Press puts unnecessary strain on your shoulders. Half-squats are, in fact, bad for your knees, while a full range of motion with manageable weights actually strengthens them. Hunched reps and over-arching of the back when deadlifting is a nasty injury just waiting to happen.

On the flip side, if you lift with strict attention to form and a full range of motion, you'll enjoy full development of your muscles, steady gains, and no unnecessary injuries or pains.

So, let's go over proper form for some of the key exercises that you will be doing as a part of my program.

THE SQUAT

Anyone that squats properly immediately gets my respect in the gym, regardless of the weight they're using.

Unfortunately, very, very few people actually do it right. The most common error is, of course, doing partial reps by not lowering the body until the hips drop lower than the knees. Shallow squats lead to all kinds of knee problems, especially when done with heavy weight, whereas proper squats actually strengthen the supporting muscles to the knees and prevent injury.

When performed correctly, the Squat is a safe, incredibly powerful exercise that you will come to love because of how beneficial it is to your entire body.

Squat Setup

Always squat in a Power Rack or Squat Rack, with the safety bars/pins set six inches or so below the height of the bar at the bottom of the rep (which you'll learn about in a minute). Do this even if you have a spotter.

Position the bar on the rack so it cuts across the upper half of your chest. This might feel a bit low, but it's better to have it on the lower side than trying to tippy-toe heavy weight off the rack.

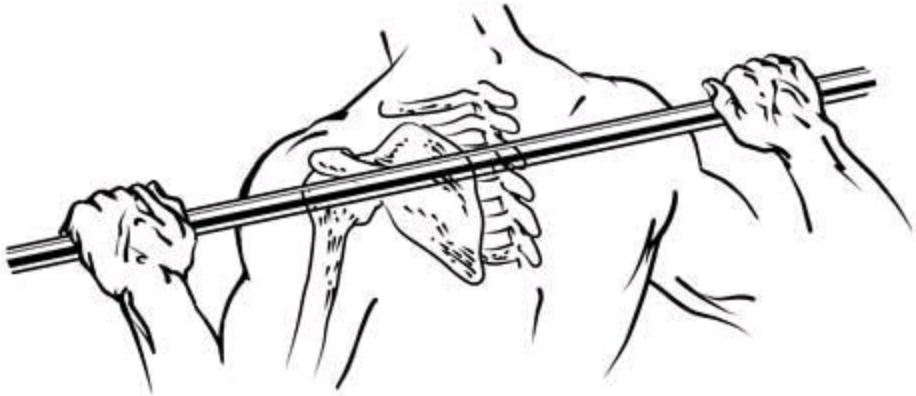
Face the bar so you can walk it out backward. Don't ever walk the bar out forward, as trying to re-rack it by walking backward is very dangerous.

Get under the bar and place your heels at about shoulder-width apart, with the toes pointed out at about 30-degree angles (your right foot at about 1 o'clock, and your left at about 11 o'clock, if that helps with the visual).

When you're ready to unrack the bar, bring your shoulder-blades together, tighten your entire upper back, raise your chest up, and straighten your lower back. Put the bar below the bone at the top of your shoulder-blades, solidly across your upper back muscles and rear deltoids.

Use a narrow grip because this helps you maintain upper-back tightness. Place your thumbs on top of the bar.

Here's a picture to help:



Notice how all of the weight is resting on his back, with none on his hands. This is important. The wide grip that many people use slackens the back muscles, which provide crucial support for the weight, and transfers the load to the spine. Don't follow their lead.

This position will probably feel a bit awkward at first, and you might need to stretch your shoulders to get your hands into the proper position. Whatever you do, do NOT put the bar on your neck!

If you really can't get the bar this low yet due to shoulder inflexibility, that's okay. Place it as close to this position as possible and as you continue to train, work on getting to this ideal position. As long as you don't feel it resting on your neck or feel your hands supporting the weight, you'll be fine.

Squat Movement

Once you've unracked the weight, take one or two steps back, and assume the proper squatting position as outlined above (heels shoulder-width apart, toes pointed out).

Pick a spot on the floor about six feet away, and stare at that for the entirety of the set. Don't

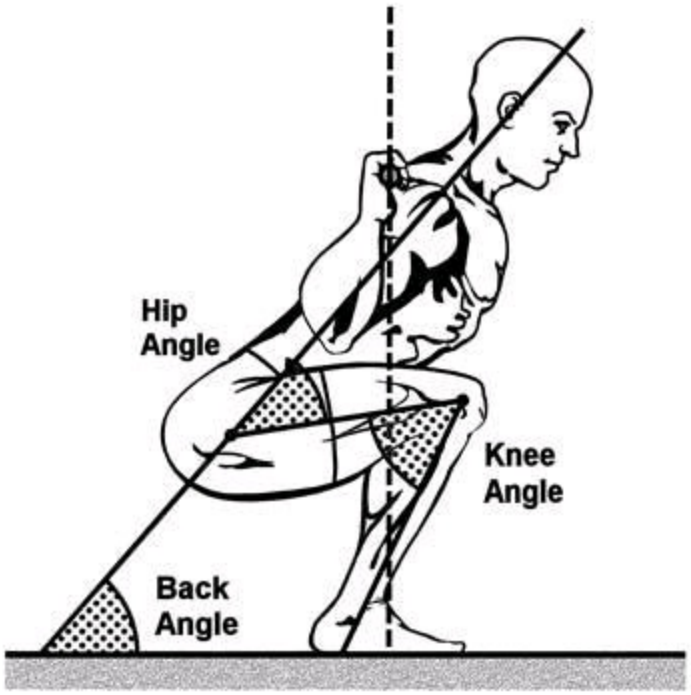
look up at the ceiling as some people advise as this alone completely ruins form—it makes it almost impossible to reach the proper bottom position, it throws off proper hip movement and chest positioning, and it can cause a neck injury.

You're now ready to start the downward motion, which is accomplished by sitting the butt straight down while keeping the chest up, and the back straight and tight.

Many people have the tendency to want to transfer the load to the quads as the squat gets deep. One way to do this is to slide the knees forward, which can lead to weird pains and problems. A good rule of thumb is that any forward motion of the knees should occur in the first third or half of the descent, and the knees should go no further than just in front of the toes. Once the knees are out of the way and in place, the movement becomes a straight drop of the hips, followed by a straight lift of them.

The bottom of the squat is the point where your hips are back and slightly lower than your kneecap (which causes your femurs to be a little lower than parallel with the ground), your knees are just a little forward of the toes and pointing in the same direction as your feet (out about a 30-degree angle, not in), and the back is as straight as possible and at an angle that places the bar over the middle of the foot.

I know that's a bit hard to visualize, so here's a simple diagram to help:

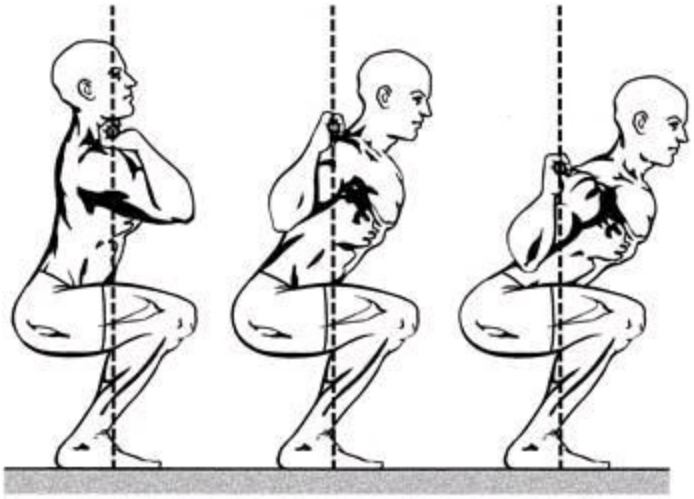


As you can see, the bar is low on the back, the back is completely flat and inclined at about a 45-degree angle, the hips are a little lower than the knees, the femurs are slightly past parallel, the feet are flat on the floor, and the knees are a little forward of the toes. This is the proper bottom of the Squat.

I recommend that you practice this with no bar to really get a feel for it. If you're having trouble

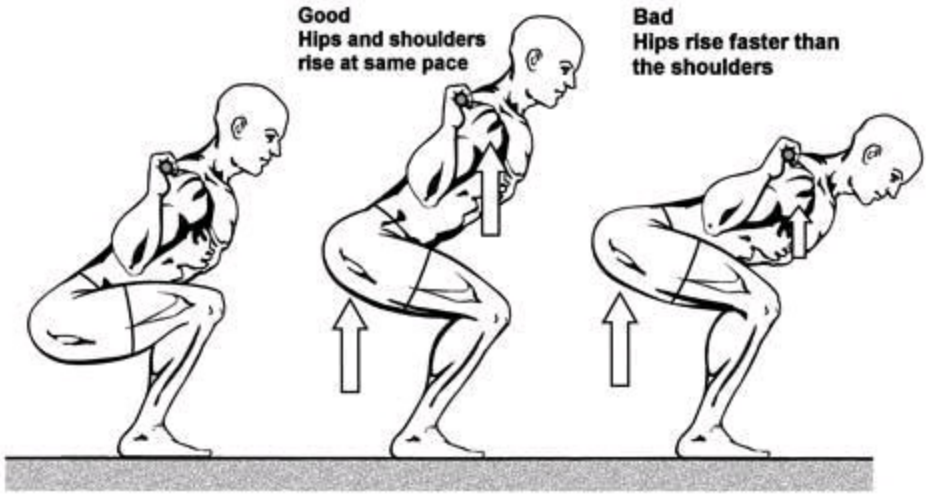
getting your knees to point in line with your feet, you can, at the bottom, place your elbows against your knees and the palms of your hands together, and nudge your knees out.

If you need to place the bar a bit higher on your back due to shoulder stiffness, the angles change slightly. Here's another diagram to help:



All the way to the left is the proper bottom position for the Front Squat. The middle is a high-bar Squat, and the far right is the low-bar Squat that I recommend you get comfortable doing.

Once you've reached the bottom, you drive your butt straight up—not forward—and bring your shoulders up at the same pace. To do this, you must maintain a back angle that keeps the weight over the middle of your foot. If your hips rise faster than your shoulders, you'll start tipping forward, which puts heavy strain on the neck and back.



Don't think about anything but driving your hips straight up, and you'll do it correctly. Keep your chest up and your back straight—don't let it hunch.

Squat Tips

Take a deep breath at the top of the first rep—when you're standing tall—and hold it, tightening your entire torso. Don't fully exhale during the set. You can completely hold your breath, or exhale slightly (maybe 10% of the air you're holding) on the way up for each rep, and then fill up with air again at the top.

Don't squat on a Smith Machine, as the fixed range of motion will prevent you from performing the exercise correctly and can hurt the knees.

If your back tends to round at the bottom, it's because your hamstrings are too tight. Stretch them every day (but not before lifting, as studies have shown that this saps strength and actually increases the risk of injury), and as they loosen, you'll find that you can keep your back straight for the entire lift.

Don't point your feet straight forward as this puts quite a lot of stress on the knees. As the stance widens, the body naturally wants the feet to be parallel with the thighs. By twisting the feet in, you put torque on the knees and, when loaded with weight and squatting deep, this can lead to injuries.

You can start your movement upward by creating a little "bounce" at the very bottom of the squat as your hamstrings, glutes, and groin muscles stretch to the limit of their natural ranges of motion. Don't pause at the bottom of the lift but instead use this slight bounce to initiate the drive upward.

If you're having trouble keeping your knees pointed out during the lift, you can take light (or no) weight and squat with your toes picked up off the ground, placing all the weight on your heels. By doing this, you will have no choice but to point your knees outward. Do this for a few reps, and then settle into the middle of your foot and do a few more reps, paying attention to the knees. Repeat this until you have it perfect.

Don't use a powerlifter's wide squatting stance unless you're actually powerlifting. This type of stance does allow for more weight to be lifted, but it reduces the role of the quads.

Don't squat with a block under your heels, as this is done to compensate for a lack of hamstring flexibility. Instead, squat as described in this chapter and work on getting lower and lower, stretching your hamstrings. If you stick to it, you'll get there.

THE BENCH PRESS

Benching a lot of weight is synonymous with being manly and strong. When a guy wants to judge your overall fitness, he'll probably ask, "How much do you bench?"

The desire to want to bench a lot often leads to many mistakes: failing to bring the weight all the way down, over-arching the back, rolling the shoulders, flaring the elbows, and more . I see these things literally every day and will often say something as improper form with heavy weights is how injuries occur.

So, how do you do the Bench Press properly?

Bench Press Setup

A strong Bench Press starts with a strong base. A strong base requires the right setup.

Squeeze your shoulder blades together before getting into position, and keep your back squeezed and down for the entire lift.

Your back should have a slight arch before and during the lift. The space created between your lower back and the bench should be just enough to snugly fit a fist, but not more.

Raise your chest as if you're going to show it to someone and keep it "up" for the entire lift.

If your grip is too narrow, you'll lose strength. If it's too wide, you'll reduce the range of motion and thus effectiveness of the exercise. Your grip width should be a few inches wider than shoulder-width (about 22 – 28 inches, depending on your build).

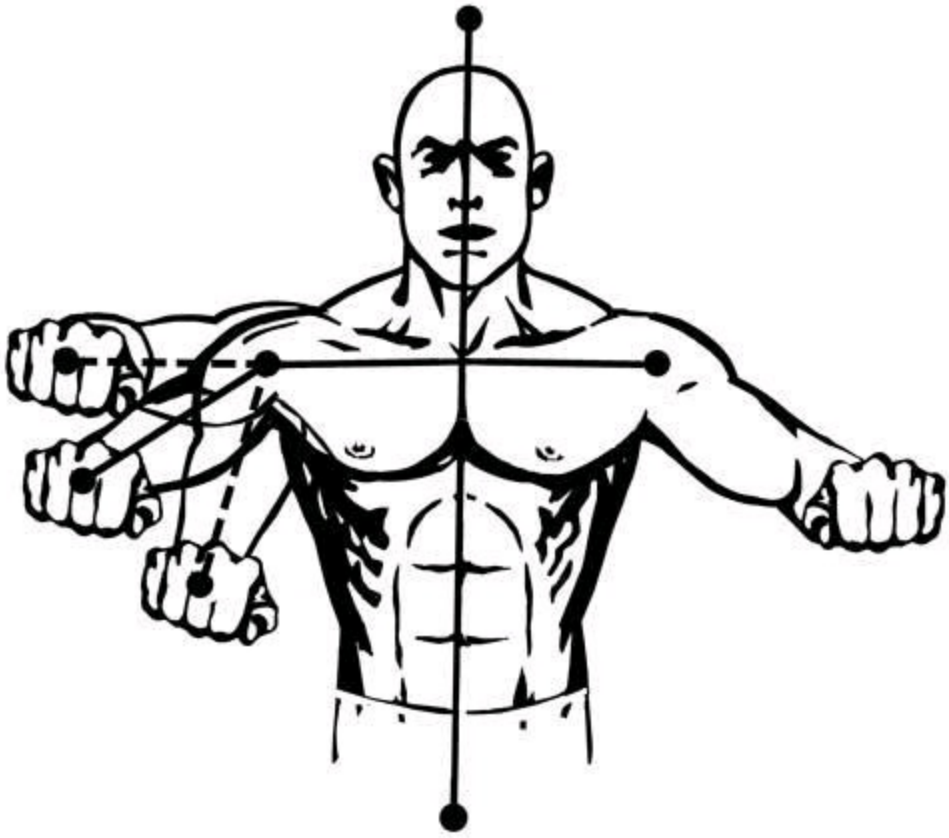
A common mistake is the "thumbless" grip, where you don't wrap your thumbs around the bar but place them next to your index fingers instead. While some people give various reasons for liking the thumbless grip, the reason to not use it is when you're going heavy, it's very easy to have the barbell slip out of your hands and crash down on your chest (just Google "thumbless grip bench press accident" if you don't believe me!).

Put the bar in the palm of your hand, not in your fingers, because this leads to wrist pains.

Grip the bar *hard*. Try to crush it like spaghetti. Believe it or not, this will give you a little boost in strength.

Your elbows should be pointing out from the body at about a 45 – 60-degree angle (between parallel and perpendicular to your torso). Keep your elbows "tucked" like this the entire time. Flaring them out puts undue stress on the shoulders.

Here's an image to help:



Plant your feet firmly on the floor with the weight on the heels, and space them widely apart. The upper part of your leg should be parallel to the floor, and the lower part should be perpendicular (forming a 90-degree angle), which improves strength and prevents heavy arching of the back.

Don't put your feet on the end of the bench—keep them on the floor. The knees-up position is less stable than the conventional position, and shouldn't be used with heavy weights.

Bench Press Movement

The proper bench press form is a controlled movement of bringing the bar all the way down to the very bottom of your chest, followed by an explosive drive upward. The bar should move in a straight line up and down, not toward your face or belly button.

There is often debate over the point of whether you should bring the bar to your chest or not. Many fitness experts claim that you should lower the weight no further than the point where your upper arm is parallel to the floor, as doing this reduces the possibility of injury to the shoulders. This is nonsense.

Reducing the range of motion only reduces the effectiveness of the exercise, and Bench Press-related shoulder injuries are caused by improper technique, such as rolling the shoulders at the top and flaring the elbows out.

The possibility of injury will be greatly reduced (if not entirely eliminated) by maintaining perfect form, and a full range of motion will give you better muscle development in both your chest and shoulders.

Bench Press Tips

Unrack the bar by getting into position (pinching your shoulder blades, arching your back slightly, and pushing your chest up), locking your elbows out to move the bar off the hooks, and moving the bar into position with your elbows still locked. Don't try to bring the weight straight from the hooks to your chest. Don't drop your chest and loosen your shoulder blades when unracking, because it will make you shrug the bar off with your shoulders.

To help with lifting the bar straight up and down, look at the ceiling during the exercise and see the bar coming up, stopping in relation to a feature on the ceiling, and then going down. When you bring it back up, bring it up to the same spot in relation to the feature you've spotted on the ceiling. Don't watch the bar as it moves as you will inevitably vary its angle of descent and ascent.

Don't allow your chest to go flat while doing the press, and don't allow your shoulders to roll forward.

Use your legs to drive against the floor, which transfers force up through the hips and back and helps maintain proper form and increase strength.

Keep your butt on the bench at all times. If your butt is lifting, the weight is probably too heavy.

Don't bounce the bar off your chest. Lower it in a controlled manner keeping everything tight, let it touch your chest, and drive it up.

Don't smash the back of your head into the bench, as this can strain your neck. Your neck will naturally tighten while doing the exercise, but don't forcefully push it down.

When you're lowering the weight, think about the coming drive up. Visualize the explosive second half of the exercise the entire time, and you'll find it easier to control the descent of the weight, prevent bouncing, and even prepare your muscles for the imminent stress of raising the weight. (This technique is good for all exercises, by the way.)

Make sure to finish your last rep before trying to rack the weight. Many guys make the mistake of moving the bar toward their face on the way up during their last rep, and this is dangerous (what if you miss the rep and it starts coming down?) and bad for the shoulders. Press the weight straight up as a usual, lock your elbows out, and move the bar back to the rack until it hits the uprights, and then lower it to the hooks (don't go for the hooks first because you might miss them).

Bench Press Variations

As a part of my program, you're going to do two variations of the Bench Press: the Close-Grip Bench Press, and the Incline Bench Press.

Incline Bench Press

The Incline Bench Press heavily involves the shoulders and upper part of the pecs, and is a useful exercise to work into your routines.

When doing this exercise, the angle of incline in the bench should be between 30 – 45 degrees. The basic setup and movement is just as you learned for the flat Bench Press, and the bar should pass by the chin and touch just below the collarbones. This will allow for a vertically straight bar path.

Close-Grip Bench Press

As you narrow your grip on the bar, the chest does less work, and the triceps do more. Thus, the Close-Grip Bench Press is a great exercise for targeting your triceps.

When doing a Close-Grip Bench Press, your grip should be slightly narrower than shoulder-width. The rest of the setup and movement is exactly as you just learned.

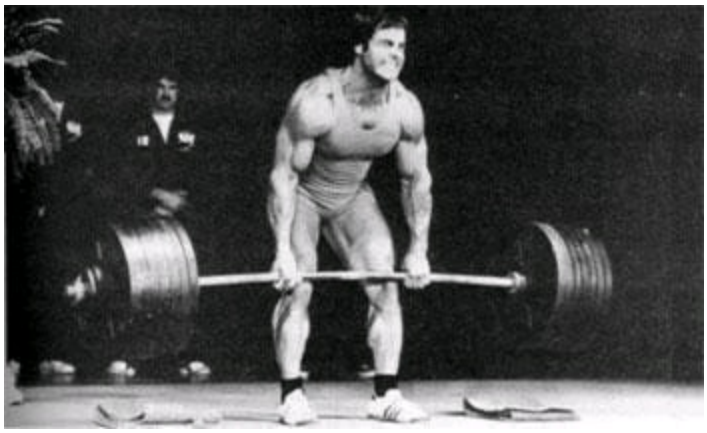
If your wrists hurt at the bottom of the lift, simply widen your grip by about the width of a finger and try again. If they still hurt, repeat until there's no pain.

You'll probably find that you fail much more suddenly on the Close-Grip Bench Press than the regular Bench Press. That's because the Close-Grip variation is relying mainly on the triceps, which are a smaller muscle than the pectorals. Ensure your spotter knows this, and if you don't have a spotter, don't try for that next rep if you don't think you can make it.

THE DEADLIFT

Like the Squat, the Deadlift is one of the toughest and most rewarding lifts you can do. When you see someone deadlifting big weight with perfect form, you're witnessing a rare, admirable feat.

In case you're not familiar with this lift, here's a picture of Franco Columbo deadlifting a herculean amount of weight.



The program you'll be doing will require quite a bit of deadlifting, and there are many ways to mess this lift up, so I want to take a few pages to fully describe proper form.

Deadlift Setup and Movement

Always start with the bar on the floor—not on the safety pins or on the rack.

Your stance should be a bit narrower than shoulder-width, and your toes should be pointed

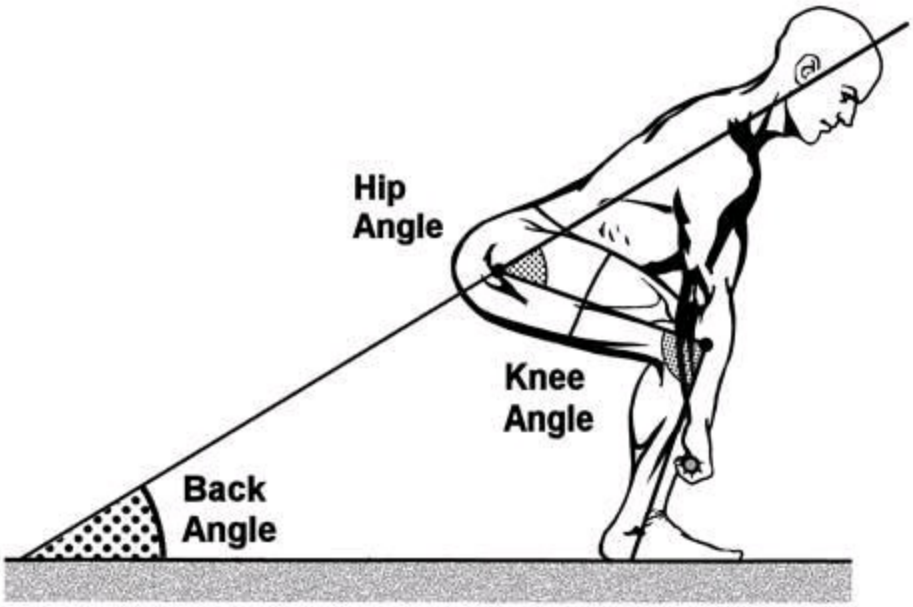
slightly out. You should stand with the bar above the middle of your feet (the top of your instep).

Bend at your waist and grip the bar by placing it into the middle of your palms, not in your fingers. Both palms should be facing in to build grip strength. The other grip option is the "alternate" method where one palm faces in (usually the non-dominant hand) and the other faces out, which can allow for heavier weight to be lifted.

Your arms should be just outside your legs, leaving enough room for your thumbs to clear your thighs.

Bend through your knees until your shins touch the bar, and then lift your chest until your back is in a neutral position and tight. Don't overarch your back, and don't squeeze your shoulder-blades together like with the Squat. Just push your chest up and your shoulders and back down. Your elbows should be completely straight.

Here's what this position looks like:

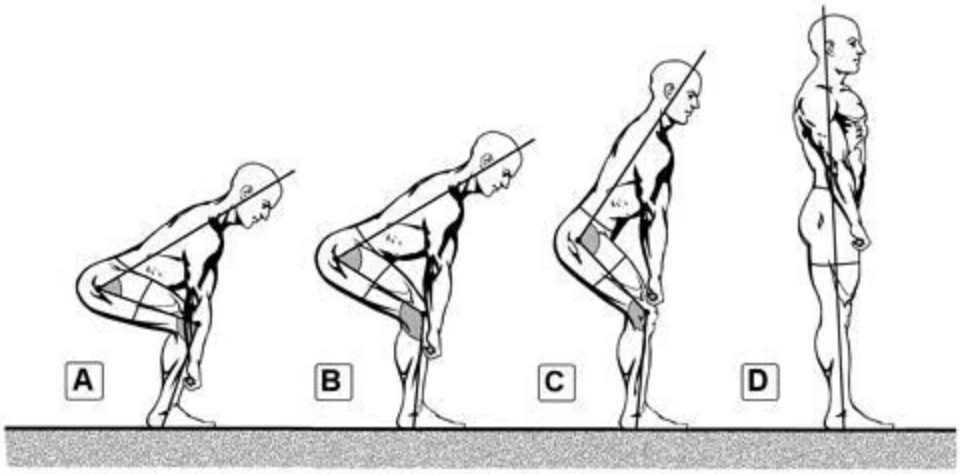


You're now ready to pull.

Take a deep breath, look forward, and start the upward movement by engaging the quads to begin the straightening of the knees. This will pull the bar up your shins, and once the weight is off the ground, join your hips into the upward movement and keep your back neutral and tight the whole way up. You should try to keep the bar on as vertically straight of a path as possible (absolute isn't attainable, but there should be little lateral movement of the bar as you lift it up).

The bar should move up your shins, and roll over your knees and thighs. At the top, your chest should be out and your shoulders down. Don't lean back, shrug the weight, or roll your shoulders up and back.

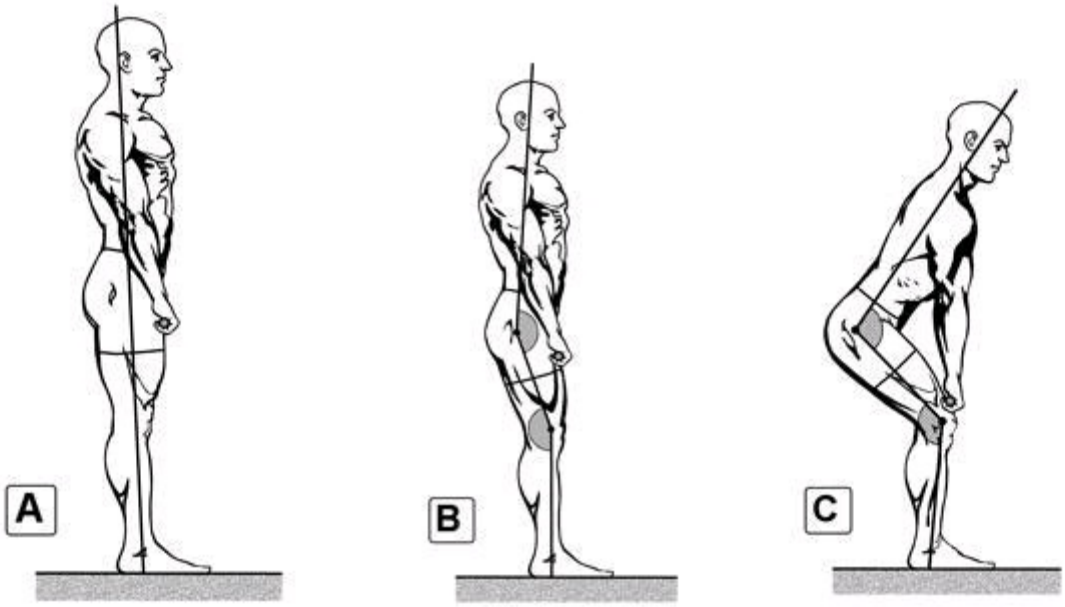
Here's how the entire first half of the lift looks:

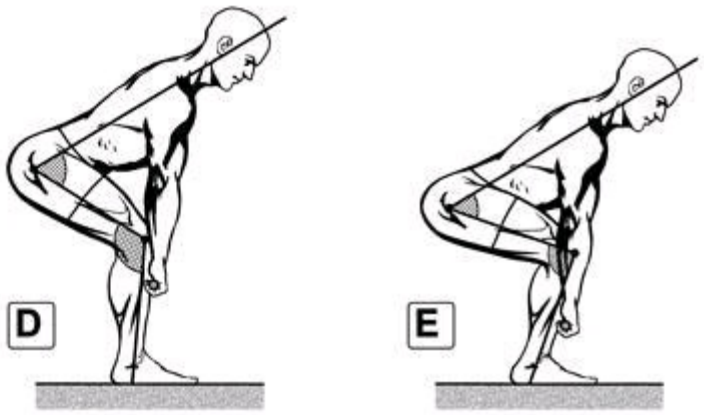


The next half of the movement is lowering the weight back down to the floor in a controlled manner (yes, it must go all the way back to the floor!). This is simply a mirror image of what you did to come up.

You begin to lower the bar by pushing your hips back first, letting the bar descend in a straight line until it reaches your knees. At that point, you bend your knees and lower it down your shins. The back stays locked in its tight, neutral position the entire time.

Here's how it looks:





Deadlift Tips

Don't start with your hips too low. Remember that the Deadlift starting position is not the same as the Squat bottom position. The Deadlift requires that your hips be higher than the bottom of the Squat.

When you're lowering the weight, if you break your knees too early, you'll hit them with the bar. To avoid this, begin your descent by pushing your hips back first and don't bend your knees until it the bar reaches your knees.

If you start the upward motion with bent elbows, you'll end up putting unnecessary strain on your biceps. Keep your elbows straight for the entire lift.

Deadlifting in shoes that have air cushions or gel filling is a bad idea. It compromises stability, causes power loss, and interferes with proper form. Get shoes with flat, hard soles like Chuck Taylors.

Wear long pants and long socks on the day that you'll be deadlifting to prevent shin scraping. Shin scraping can be caused by poor form, but can also be unavoidable depending on the length of the limbs and body type.

Too wide of a stance or grip will make the exercise awkward. The Deadlift stance is narrower than the Squat stance, and the Deadlift requires that the hands be just outside the legs.

Don't strain to look up while deadlifting. Keep your head in a neutral position and in line with your spine.

If you start the upward lift with your hips too high, you'll turn the Deadlift into a Stiff-Legged Deadlift, which is more stressful on the lower back and hamstrings. Make sure that you get your hips low enough in the starting position (but not too low!).

Explode the bar up from the floor as fast as you can. Apply as much force as quickly as possible and you'll be able to move more weight.

Try to crush the bar with your grip. If your knuckles aren't white, you're not squeezing hard enough.

Use the alternating grip if your grip isn't strong enough to allow you to use the overhand style.

Deadlift Variations

Romanian Deadlift

The "RDL," as it's often called, was started by a Romanian powerlifter named Nicu Vlad, who would perform outrageous feats of strength like front squatting 700 lbs while only weighing 220 bls.

The RDL is a variation of the Deadlift that targets the glutes and hamstrings, and minimizes the involvement of the quads and hip muscles.

The RDL starts with the weight on safety pins or the lower portion of the rack. The same stance and grip is used as the Deadlift, and the weight is walked back a step or two. In the start position, the knees are locked, the chest is up, the back is straight and tight, and the eyes are focused on a point on the floor about ten feet away.

When the movement is begun, the knees are unlocked just enough to put some tension on the quads, and the back is slightly arched. The bar is started down the thigh in a straight line by pushing the hips back, and the torso leans forward to keep the shoulders directly over the bar. As the bar approaches the knees, move them back, out of the way, and drop the bar past the knees, moving it along the shins. Go as low as you can without breaking the extension of your back.

Resist the temptation to relax the tension in the knees at the bottom by flexing them, as this transfers the load from the hamstrings to the quads.

Once you've achieved a good stretch in your hamstrings and your back is ready to unlock, start back up. On the way up, keep your chest and back tight and locked into position, and move the bar along your legs.

Because of the increasing angle of the torso, you probably won't be able to go much further than a few inches past your knees, and that's okay. In fact, if the weight is touching the floor, you're doing it wrong (you're bending your knees).

Make sure to hold your back rigid for the entire lift. Don't let the chest sag or the lower back loosen.

THE REST OF THE EXERCISES YOU'LL BE DOING

You'll be doing more exercises than those I've covered thus far, of course, but I wanted to give the Squat, Bench Press, and Deadlift special attention as they are essential for building a great body,

but dangerous if performed incorrectly.

For the rest of the exercises you're going to be doing in the program, I could write another several pages, but I think it will be better if you simply watch videos as there just aren't very many technical points to doing the rest of the exercises correctly.

The best collection of videos that I've found is offered by bodybuilding.com, which you can find at http://www.bodybuilding.com/exercises/. Their videos won't teach you everything you now know about the core barbell exercises, but they are good for simpler movements like the Dumbbell Curl, Front Lat Pull Down, Leg Press, and so forth.

Make sure to watch the videos for each exercise before you do them for the first time.

IS A SPOTTER NECESSARY?

Although having a spotter isn't entirely necessary as you should only be handling weight that you can do clean, unassisted reps with, it does help for a couple of reasons.

First, it allows you to get that one extra rep that you might not want to try otherwise, especially with exercises like Bench Press and Squats.

Second, there's a strange strength benefit to having someone standing there to assist you, even if they do nothing more than put their hands under or even fingers under the bar. I know it sounds like broscience, but you'll experience it—you'll be struggling on your last rep, your buddy will just put his fingers under the bar, and suddenly you'll push it up.

If you don't have someone to work out with, I recommend that you ask someone to give you a spot when necessary. It'll help.

When you're spotting another, the proper way to do it is like this:

1. Help them with the lift off if necessary (such as with the Bench Press and Military Press).

2. Let them do the reps without any assistance from you.

3. If they get bogged down on a rep, first just put your hands in place to help.

4. If they're still stuck, take maybe 10% of the load off.

5. If they're still stuck, take another 10 – 15% of the load off.

6. If they're still stuck, they're toast and just take as much of the load off as you can.

I don't want to make this sound complicated, but a good spotter is there for safety reasons only, and if you're moving the weight up, he doesn't touch it. He only ends the set when totally necessary.

While the technique of spotting is self explanatory in most cases, I'd like to mention here the proper way to spot someone who's squatting. The key is to the spot the bar, not the person. Don't hook your arms under the lifter's armpits as the purpose of spotting is to lift weight off, and spotting the person's body isn't the safest way to do this.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR STRENGTH WHILE PREVENTING INJURY

What if I told you that with one simple technique you could immediately increase your strength on every lift while reducing the chance of getting injured?

Well, you can, and most guys have no clue about this. Where does the "secret" lie? It's in how you warm up each muscle group before going heavy.

Warm up incorrectly, and you can actually reduce your strength or set yourself up to get injured once you start loading up the heavy weights. Warm up correctly, however, and you will find that you can lift more without increasing the risk of injury. This leads to workouts where you can attain maximum overload and thus maximum growth without having to worry about getting hurt.

So, how do you warm up correctly?

HOW TO WARM UP THE WRONG WAY

The purpose of the warm-up is to infuse enough blood into the muscle and connective tissues so that they can be maximally recruited to handle the heavy sets.

The warm-up should not fatigue your muscles—period. This is the biggest mistake I see most guys make when warming up. Their warm-ups look something like this:

Put 135 pounds on a bench press and do about 10-15 reps. Rest a few minutes and then go to 185 pounds for 12 reps. After another short rest, they go up to 205 pounds for another 10 reps, which feels a little heavy by number 10. A few minutes later, they're doing 7 or 8 reps with 225, which also feels heavy by the end. Next is 5 or 6 reps with 240, ending with muscle failure. Finally they get up to 275 and struggle for 3 reps.

What does this do? Sure, they're "warmed up," but to the point where they've almost completely exhausted their muscles before they could even get to the muscle-building sets (the heavy sets that overload the chest). Just making this "little" mistake in training can lead to slow, lackluster gains.

HOW TO WARM UP THE *BIGGER LEANER STRONGER* WAY

A correct warm-up introduces blood into the muscle group being trained and its supporting muscles while progressively acclimating them to heavy weight, but it does NOT fatigue the muscles. You want your muscles fresh and ready for the heavy sets—the muscle-building sets—so that you can go as heavy as possible for 4 - 6 reps.

So, here's how you do it:

First Set:

In your first warm-up set, you want to do 12 reps with about 50% of your "heavy set weight" and then you rest for 1minute. Don't rush this set, but don't take it too slowly either. It will feel very light and easy.

So, if you did 3 sets of 5 with 275 on the bench last week, you would start your warm-up at 135 and do 12 reps, followed by 1 minute of rest.

Second Set:

In your second set, you use the same weight as the first and do 10 reps this time at a little faster pace. Then rest for 1 minute.

Third Set:

Your third set is 4 reps with about 70% of your heavy weight, and it should be done at a moderate pace. It should still feel light and easy. This set and the following one are to acclimate your muscles with the heavy weights that are about to come. Once again, you follow this with a 1-minute rest.

With a heavy weight of 275, this would be about 180 – 185 pounds.

Fourth Set:

The fourth set is the final warm-up set, and it's very simple: 1 rep with about 90% of your heavy weight. This is to fully acclimate your muscles to the heavy sets that you're about to start. Then rest 2 – 3 minutes before starting your next sets.

This would be about 250 pounds if your heavy weight is 275.

Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Sets:

These are your heavy, muscle-building sets. All the sets leading up to these are nothing more than warm-up sets and don't result in any muscle growth.

Moving on to the Next Exercise:

Let's say you now are going to do some Incline Dumbbell Presses. Should you do a new warm-up routine? The answer is no. Your muscles are completely warmed up and able to handle heavy weight, so why would you bother?

The only exception to this is the rare case of moving on to an exercise that involves muscles that would not have been warmed up, such as going from Lat Pulldowns to Deadlifts. If you start your back routine on the Lat Pulldown machine and warm up there, you'd be fine going straight into exercises like Barbell or Dumbbell Rows, Low Rows, V-bar Pulldowns, Weighted Pull-ups, and so on, but since Deadlifts put considerable stress on your lower back and hamstrings, you should do a

couple warm-up sets to prevent injury to these muscles.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Warming up correctly is a very important part of training heavily and building muscle effectively. It makes you stronger and thus able to better overload your muscles, and it prevents injury.

Trust me; it's worth spending your first 10 minutes warming up instead of just rushing into the heavy lifting.

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YOUR *BIGGER LEANER STRONGER* WORKOUT PLAN

Now that you know exactly how to eat and train for maximum results, all you need to get started is an exact training plan to follow. Well, let's get to it.

DON'T FORGET THE FORMULA

First and foremost, you must always apply what you learned in the *Bigger Leaner Stronger* training formula. How you train is just as important as what exercises you do. If you followed the workouts given in this chapter but violated the formula, you'd make less-than-optimum gains. On the flip side, if you followed the formula but did the wrong exercises, you'd also make less-than-optimum gains.

When you combine consistent application of the formula with the proper exercises, however, you can ignite muscle growth like you've never seen before. And that's what this training plan is going to give you.

YOUR FIRST *BIGGER LEANER STRONGER* TRAINING ROUTINE

This routine calls for five days of weightlifting, as much cardio as you'd like to do based on your goals and what you now know, and two days of rest from the weights, and one day of complete rest (no exercise whatsoever).

If you can only train three or four days per week, I have a program for you, too, which I'll share at the end of this chapter. If there's any way that you can make the time to lift five days per week, however, do it. You'll make the most gains that way.

For example, here's what I do:

Mon – Fri: Lift

Sat: Complete rest

Sun – Tues/Weds: Cardio

This is easy and works for most, but you could also do something like the following:

Day 1: Lift & cardio

Day 2: Lift

Day 3: Cardio

Day 4: Lift & cardio

Day 5: Lift & cardio

Day 6: Rest

Day 7: Lift

You should do the following exercises each week for the first two months. As to what you should do after the first two months, I highly recommend that you download the free bonus report at the end of this book, because in it I fully lay out your first year in terms of training, dieting, and supplementing. I also discuss whether you should start with bulking or cutting, if you're wondering about that too.

You should do the exercises in the order given. Start with the first exercise and do your warm-up sets, followed by your three heavy sets (with the proper rest in between each, of course). Then move on to the next exercise on the list, and so forth.

In case you're not familiar with some or all of the exercises I give in this chapter, I just want to remind you that bodybuilding.com offers a great collection of videos, which you can find at http://www.bodybuilding.com/exercises/. I think this is a much better way to learn the exercises than looking at a few photos for each like what most books give you. So head on over to check the exercises out before you do them.

If you're new to lifting and you do the following exercises, training hard, and eating correctly, you can expect to put on 10 – 15 pounds of muscle in your first 2 – 3 months. Pretty exciting, no?

DAY 1: Chest and Abs

Flat Bench Press – Warm-up sets and then 3 working sets (4 – 6 reps per set)

Incline Bench Press – 3 working sets (4 – 6 reps per set)

Weighted Dip – 3 working sets (4 – 6 reps per set)

Cable Crunch – 3 sets (enough weight to allow 10 – 12 reps per set)

Captain's Chair Leg Raise (no weight, as many as you can do) – 3 sets

Bicyles (no weight, as many as you can do) – 3 sets

The Bench Press is one of the most effective chest-building exercises you can do, and by doing flat and incline presses, you'll be working each part of your chest. The Weighted Dip is also one of my favorites because you can get a great stretch and hit your chest on an angle that weights just can't duplicate.

The most effective ab routine I've been able to come up with over the years relies on the three exercises given above. It's nothing fancy, but it will rock your core. What I do is, after a set of chest, go immediately to Cable Crunches. Once I've done that, I immediately do Leg Raises to failure, followed by Bicycles (also called "Air Bikes") to failure. I then rest 1 – 2 minutes and get back to chest. Three of these "supersets" and your abs will be crying for mercy. If you can work up to 5 – 6 sets, you're a superstar.

DAY 2: Back and Calves

Barbell Deadlift – Warm-up sets and then 3 working sets

One-Arm Dumbbell Row – 3 working sets

Close-Grip Lat Pulldown – 3 working sets

Seated or Standing Calf Raise – 6 sets (enough weight to allow 10 – 12 reps per set)

All of these exercises are great overall back builders, and this combination will work your entire back.

If you have lower-back issues, skip the Deadlifts. At the end of this chapter, I provide other great exercises for each body part, so substitute in another "approved" exercise for the Deadlifts.

I recommend that you work calves on a day other than legs because, in order to save time, you will need to do them directly after a major set and then rest 1 – 2 minutes (just like abs). Doing

anything other than sitting down can be pretty rough after a set of heavy Squats, so I like to do calves and abs on days where I'm not working my legs.

DAY 3: Shoulders

Seated Barbell Military Press – Warm-up sets and then 3 working sets

Side Lateral Raise – 3 working sets

Bent-Over Rear Delt Raise – 3 working sets

Barbell Shrugs – 3 working sets

The shoulder is a muscle (deltoid) that's comprised of three "heads": the anterior (front), lateral (side), and posterior (back). If you want full, round shoulders, you need to work each head, and these three exercises ensure that you fully work the entire muscle group.

Shrugs are a great exercise for building your traps. You don't have to do these if you don't like the "big traps" look, as they will get naturally worked on other exercises like Deadlifts. (I did Shrugs for a while and didn't like how my neck was beginning to look, so I stopped).

DAY 4: Legs

Barbell Squat – Warm-up sets and then 3 working sets

Leg Press – 3 working sets

Romanian Deadlift – 3 working sets

Nothing beats heavy Squats and Leg Presses for building big, powerful legs, and Romanian Deadlifts are one of the best ways to work your lower back, hamstrings, and glutes. You will get a ton of mileage from this workout.

If you have lower-back issues, skip the RDLs and substitute another "approved" exercise for them.

DAY 5: Arms and Abs

Dumbbell Curl – Warm-up sets and then 3 working sets

Triceps Pushdown – Warm-up sets and then 3 working sets

Barbell Curl – 3 working sets

Seated Triceps Press – 3 working sets

Cable Crunch – 3 sets

Captain's Chair Leg Raise – 3 sets

Bicyles – 3 sets

This workout is a longer one. To help cut down on the time, what I do is a bicep exercise, rest 1 – 2 minutes, a triceps exercise followed immediately by an abs exercise, rest 1 – 2 minutes, back to a bicep exercise, and so forth. This is a pretty cardio-intense workout, but you should be able to complete it in about one hour.

These four arm exercises are some of the best mass-builders you can blast your arms with. Hit these hard and heavy, and your arms will explode.

Working abs a second day in the week is a great way to speed their progress. They are one of the most resilient muscle groups in the body, and it won't take long until you can comfortably work them twice per week.

Having a strong core also helps in other exercises, such as Squats, Deadlifts, Shoulder Presses, and many others.

WANT MORE WORKOUT ROUTINES?

In talking with readers, some like to take what they've learned in this book and formulate their own plans, while others would like a little help with coming up with more routines.

Therefore, I decided to create a full year's worth of training routines, and I've included it in the free bonus report that you'll find at the end of this book. Check it out when you get there!

IF YOU CAN ONLY TRAIN 3 OR 4 DAYS PER WEEK

If there's no way for you to lift five days per week, don't despair. While three days of training per week won't be as effective as five, you can still make great gains.

The following three-day program has worked best for me:

Day 1: Chest (9 working sets) & tris (6 working sets)

Day 2: Back (9 working sets) & bis (6 working sets)

Day 3: Legs (9 working sets) & shoulders (9 working sets)

You do the same workouts given earlier in this chapter. You just have to double them up each day. To prevent the workouts from taking forever, I recommend that you do the following:

Set 1 for muscle A and then rest 60 seconds

Set 1 for muscle B and then rest 60 seconds

Set 2 for muscle A and then rest 60 seconds

Set 2 for muscle B and then rest 60 seconds

And so forth. If you stick to that, they're tough workouts, but you can wrap them all up in an hour or so.

You can do abs on 1 – 2 of your off days so your workouts don't take too long.

If you can only train four days per week, here's what I recommend:

Day 1: Day 1: Chest (9 working sets) & tris (6 working sets)

Day 2: Back (9 working sets) & bis (6 working sets)

Day 3: Shoulders (9 working sets) & abs

Day 4: Legs (9 working sets)

I would rather double up on chest and back days than doing a legs and shoulders day, because the latter is just grueling.

If you want to do one extra day of abs, do it on day 6.

YOUR FIRST FEW WEEKS

For the first couple of weeks, you'll probably find many lifts a bit awkward. You'll be discovering your weight ranges, and you'll probably experience various aches and stiffness. All of this is normal and just part of the game. It shouldn't take long before you're comfortable with each exercise and your weight for each, however, and the aches will subside.

Sharp pains while lifting, however, mean that something is wrong. Don't try to muscle through a sharp pain. Instead, drop the weight and check your form. If your form is fine, stop the exercise and do another.

Stay away from the exercise that was giving you pain for a few weeks and strengthen the area with an exercise that doesn't hurt. Then try the original again and see if it still bothers you. If it still does, don't do it.

If you're having any serious pains, see a doctor as it might be an indicator of something else.

CHANGING IT UP

While the idea of "muscle confusion" is stupid and unfounded, it is true that your body can respond favorably to doing new exercises after doing the same routine for a bit. Thus, it's good to change your routine every couple of months.

What I like to do is change out an exercise or two from each workout every 8 – 10 weeks (after my De-load Week). I'll then do that new routine for the next 8 – 10 weeks, take a week off, change up the exercises, and keep the pattern going.

The key is that you substitute the *right* exercises, however, so below I've listed the exercises that you can choose from. I recommend only these because they are the most effective exercises that you can do for each muscle group.

Chest

Dumbbell Press (flat, incline)

Barbell Bench Press (flat, incline)

Weighted Dip

I usually rotate between dumbbell-centric and barbell-centric routines. For example, I'll do a routine of Incline Dumbbell Presses, Flat Dumbbell Press, and Weighted Dips for 2 – 3 months, and then switch to a routine of Flat Bench Press, Incline Bench Press, and Flat Dumbbell Press for the next 2 – 3 months.

I've found this incredibly effective in not only building my chest visually, but increasing all-around strength. I recommend that you always do at least one incline press in your chest workout, as this is the toughest type of movement you can do.

The idea of whether the chest has different "parts" that can be worked is hotly debated, but I can say with certainty that my chest didn't fully develop until I got serious about my incline presses.

Finally, I've done every chest routine you can imagine and I've intentionally left off certain exercises that people often do.

One example is the decline variation of presses, which are just not as effective as the flat and incline variations because they shorten the length of the rep (meaning less work is done by the muscle group). The argument for doing decline presses is that they work the lower chest, but the Weighted Dip is a far superior movement for this purpose, while also involving more overall muscles, more balance and coordination, and more nervous system stimulation.

I've also left out isolation exercises such as flyes and machine presses because they won't build mass and strength anywhere nearly as effectively as the compound movements I've recommended.

Back

Barbell Deadlift

Weighted Pull-Up

One-Arm Dumbbell Row

T-Bar Row

Bent-Over Barbell Row

Front Lat Pulldown

Close-Grip Pulldown

Seated Cable Row (wide- and close-grip)

The Deadlift is, by far, the most effective back exercise you can do. You just can't beat it for all-around development and strength. If you're careful to always keep proper form and not rush to handle more weight than you can properly lift, you shouldn't run into any of the lower-back or knee-related issues that people sometimes complain about. That being said, I like to give my lower back a 2 – 3 week break from Deadlifts every 4 – 6 months.

So, most of your back workouts will start with Deadlifts. For your other two exercises, I recommend choosing a close-grip exercise for targeting the middle of your back, and a wide-gripped

exercise for targeting your lats. The Weighted Pull-Up, T-Bar Row, and Bent-Over Barbell Row are especially effective choices as they work the entire back (middle-back and lats, and for the latter two, the lower-back as well).

A few workouts I really enjoy are Barbell Deadlift, T-Bar Row, and One-Arm Dumbbell Row; Barbell Deadlift, Bent-Over Barbell Row, Close-Grip Pulldown; and Barbell Deadlift, Front Lat Pulldown, Weighted Pull-Up.

Shoulders

Seated Barbell Military Press

Seated Dumbbell Press

Arnold Dumbbell Press

Dumbbell Front Raise

Side Lateral Raise

Bent-Over Rear Delt Raise

Seated Rear Delt Raise

Barbell Shrugs

I like to keep my shoulder workouts simple: one exercise for each head, always starting with an overhead press. My favorite overall exercise is the Seated Barbell Military Press, because it just blasts the anterior (front) head of the shoulder.

The Dumbbell Front Raise is a good exercise, but don't do this in the place of the Military or Dumbbell Press as it simply doesn't build mass like those two do. If you're particularly weak on your press exercises, the Front Raise can be very helpful in strengthening many of the small, supporting muscles required for the tougher lifts, and it can be added to the end of your normal workout (making it 12 working sets). I also find that a rep range of 8 – 10 reps works best for this exercise.

I only have a few shoulder routines that I rotate through: Seated Barbell Military Press, Side Lateral Raise, Bent-Over Rear Delt Raise; Seated Barbell Military Press, Dumbbell Front Raise, Side Lateral Raise, Seated Rear Delt Raise; and Seated Dumbbell (or Arnold) Press, Side Lateral Raise, Seated Rear Delt Raise.

Legs

Barbell Squat

Hack Squat

Leg Press

Romanian Deadlift

Leg Extension

Leg Curl

Calf Raise (standing or seated)

Leg Press Calf Raise

Working legs is very, very simple. Rule #1: Always do squats. Rule #2: Always do squats. Rule #3: You get the point.

My leg workouts always begin with the Barbell Squat, and my other mass-building exercise will be either the Hack Squat or Leg Press, and I'll usually finish with something that targets the hamstrings, such as the Romanian Deadlift or Leg Curl.

This is all it takes to build strong, powerful legs.

Arms (bicep):

Barbell Curl

Straight Bar Curl

E-Z Bar Curl

Dumbbell Curl

Hammer Curl

These exercises are all you need for the bicep. You can start with a bar curl or a dumbbell curl, and then do the opposite next. The Barbell Curl and Straight Bar Curl are widely considered the best overall mass builders for the bicep, and I agree.

Arms (triceps):

Close-Grip Bench Press

Seated Triceps Press

Triceps Pushdown

Lying Triceps Extension

Weighted Dip

The triceps is about two-thirds of your arm's total mass. If you don't have big triceps, your arms will never look impressive.

My favorite triceps exercises are the Close-Grip Bench Press and Seated Triceps Press. I do rotate through each of the exercises given above, however. My favorite pairings are Seated Triceps Press and Close-Grip Bench Press; Weighted Dip and Triceps Pushdown; and Close-Grip Bench Press and Weighted Dip.

Abs

Cable Crunch

Captain's Chair Leg Raise

Bicycles

Abs Roller

Decline Crunch

Hanging Leg Raise

As you know, the "secret" to having a six-pack is being lean, but it does take abs work to have a fully developed set of abs and obliques. There are a million different exercises that people and magazines recommend for abs, but I've narrowed them down to the handful given above in terms of overall effectiveness.

When building your own abs routines, I recommend starting with a weighted exercise (you can add weight to leg raise exercises by snatching a dumbbell in between your feet, and while some people add weight to the Decline Crunch by holding a plate or dumbbell, I find this pretty awkward). You then follow it with two unweighted exercises done to failure.

My routine is pretty static here. I do the Cable Crunch, Captain's Chair Leg Raise to burnout, and then either Bicycles to burnout, or the Abs Roller or Decline Crunch to burnout.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Pretty simple, isn't it? Start with the first routine I gave you in this chapter and follow it for your first two months on the program.

Once you've completed your first two months and taken your rest week, it's time to switch out some exercises and build your strength on those for the next two months. After a year or so of doing this, you'll have a really good feel for your body and what it responds to best.

Once again, I recommend that you check out the bonus report at the end of this book as you can see how I would build your first year of training to maximize your gains.

THE NO-BS GUIDE TO SUPPLEMENTS

Advanced time release formula guaranteed to feed your lean mass for up to 8 hours!

Kick your testosterone production into overdrive and maximize your gains!

Assault estrogen receptors in your body and completely block muscle-killing hormones!

The shelves of your local GNC are packed with all kinds of bogus junk claiming to deliver results that only steroids can achieve.

This includes pre-workout supplements, intra-workout supplements, post-workout supplements, test boosters, HGH boosters, nitric oxide supplements, anti-estrogens, aromatase inhibitors, and the list goes on and on.

If you believe half of the hype you read in supplement advertisements or on their labels, well, it would probably take a while before you realize the simple truth of the matter, which is...

Most everything you see in the world of workout supplements is utterly worthless.

Yup...a complete waste of money. Not all. But most.

How can I say that so confidently? I've not only tried every type of supplement you can imagine, but I've studied the science and only follow what has been objectively proven—not subjective testimony and fancy marketing pitches.

You see, the supplement companies are cashing in BIG on a little trick that your mind can play on you known as the *placebo effect*. This is the scientifically proven fact that your simple belief in the effectiveness of a medicine or supplement can make it work. People have overcome every form of illness you can imagine, mental and physical, by taking substances which they believed to have therapeutic value, but which actually didn't. I'm talking about things like curing cancer and diabetes, eliminating depression and anxiety, and lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels by taking medically worthless substances that the people believed were treatments for their problems.

Many guys *believe* that the shiny new bottle of "muscle-maximizing" pills will work, and then they sometimes actually do "feel them working" even though, it comes out later, the ingredients have never been scientifically proven to do anything the company claims. Or, it's revealed that the scientific trials they tout in their ads were biased and invalid.

Now, I will say this: There are certain pro-testosterone and pro-GH supplements that hit the

market that legitimately do work. Unfortunately, these ALWAYS contain compounds (drugs) that get banned by the FDA. After the effective compounds get banned, the companies continue to sell the products without them, and people wonder why they don't seem to work anymore.

With that being said, there are a small handful of supplements that actually are worth buying and using. They aren't the sexy muscle building crap pushed by 'roid monsters in the magazines, but they are scientifically proven to help you build muscle.

So, let's go through the common types of supplements out there and look at what you should and shouldn't spend your hard-earned cash on.

Protein Supplements

Protein is the nutrient most responsible for muscle growth and repair. Using protein supplements such as whey, egg, and casein powders isn't necessary, but it is convenient.

Unless you are in the lucky position of being able to have whole food meals ready 4 – 6 times per day, you're going to need to use protein supplements.

I've tried a ton of protein supplements over the years and have settled on a small handful of products that I feel are the highest-quality for the best price. I talk about each in the bonus report offered at the end of this book, and on my website, www.buildhealthymuscle.com.

Weight Gainers

Weight gainers used to be popular as a "solution" for "hardgainers." I don't like them because most are way too high in sugar and other junk carbs. I recommend getting your calories from whole foods and traditional protein supplements instead.

BCAAs

Branched Chain Amino Acids (BCAAs) are the three "building blocks" of your body: leucine, isoleucine, and valine. They make up about 35% of your muscle mass and must be present in the body for muscle growth and repair to occur.

While that description might lead you to assume that yes, you absolutely should be buying BCAA supplements...not so fast. Most whole food proteins are made up of about 15% BCAAs, and most protein supplements have BCAAs added, so when you're eating enough protein, especially if you're using protein supplements with BCAAs added, you're getting enough BCAAs to meet your body's demands.

So, don't bother buying BCAAs unless you're doing an abnormally high amount of muscularly strenuous activity each week, which puts incredibly high amino acid demands on the body (e.g., lifting weights five times per week and playing football three days per week for a couple of hours each day).

Pre-Workout Supplements

A good pre-workout supplement is actually worth the investment, in my opinion. It will give you a kick of energy, a good pump, and increased muscle endurance.

One thing you should know about pre-workout drinks, however, is that most contain quite a bit of caffeine per serving (anywhere from 100 – 300 mg). If your body is sensitive to caffeine, you might want to try one with little or no caffeine.

You can find my preferred pre-workout supplements in the bonus report.

Creatine

Creatine is an amino acid and decades of studies have proven that it's a great strength and size booster with no negative side effects.

I definitely recommend supplementing with creatine, and you can find my preferred creatine supplement in the bonus report.

Test Boosters

Don't waste your time. These often have the most outrageous marketing claims of all and will even cite "scientific" studies done that "prove" their effectiveness. This is always BS. Honestly.

The bottom line with test boosters is that if one actually works, it contains drugs that will soon be banned by the FDA and thus become worthless. If the FDA approves all ingredients, rest assured that it does nothing.

HGH Boosters

These fall into the same category of test boosters. They're pointless. Save your money.

Glutamine

Glutamine is the most abundant single amino acid in your body. It plays a key role in muscle growth.

Research has shown that lifting weights increases your body's need for glutamine, and if you don't provide it with enough, it will steal it from skeletal muscle tissue. Supplementing glutamine has also been shown to increase growth hormone levels.

This is a supplement worth buying and taking if your protein supplement doesn't have any, or enough, added (we'll go over how much is optimal in the next chapter).

You can find my preferred glutamine supplement in the bonus report.

Nitric Oxide Supplements

These supplements are commonly comprised of the amino acids arginine, citruline, and beta-

alanine, and they stimulate the body's production of a substance called *nitric oxide*. Nitric oxide (NO) widens blood vessels and thus enables more oxygen and nutrients to get to the muscles (as the blood transports oxygen and nutrients).

While this sounds like a dubious marketing pitch, I have actually found many of these supplements to work well in terms of giving a good pump while in the gym.

Most pre-workout drinks these days contain these "NO-boosting" aminos though, so buying them separately isn't necessary. But if you're not taking a pre-workout, or your pre-workout drink doesn't contain NO-boosting aminos, then it's up to you if you want to spend the extra money on an NO supplement. I wouldn't pay money just to get a better pump. More strength, yes, but I never noticed that with NO supplements.

Multi-Vitamins

You already learned about the importance of vitamins and minerals to the many physiological processes that your body performs every day, and the easiest way to get what your body needs is a good multi-vitamin supplement. You should always be taking a daily multi.

You can find my preferred multi-vitamin supplements in the bonus report.

CLA

Conjugated linoleic acid, or CLA, is an essential fatty acid that occurs naturally in dairy products and meats.

Studies have shown that it helps the body break down fat cells, which can then be used as energy. If you aren't exercising regularly, however, your body won't likely use the energy; if you are, regular consumption of CLA can increase the amount of fat burned per workout.

Like any truly helpful fat loss supplement, CLA is no wonder product, but it does give a little boost to your fat loss regimen.

As a caveat, studies have suggested that obese people shouldn't take CLA as it may increase bad cholesterol levels and insulin resistance, which could increase the risk of developing diabetes (as of this writing, there haven't been enough human trials to establish these claims conclusively, but I wanted to mention it anyway). If you're not obese but have high cholesterol, I recommend that you don't supplement with CLA for the same reasons.

You can find my preferred CLA supplement in the bonus report.

Fat Burners

The weight loss industry is HUGE (like $30 billion+ huge) and scams abound. It seems like a new "wonder ingredient" takes the media by storm every couple of months, and millions upon millions of dollars are quickly wasted on crap like acai berry drinks and resveratrol pills.

Many people incorrectly believe that a pill can trigger massive fat loss. This simply isn't true.

There are, however, certain "fat burner" supplements can help speed up the process of losing weight when you're dieting and training properly. The most effective ones rely on caffeine and other stimulants to boost the metabolism, but you have a few other options too.

You can find my preferred fat burners in the bonus report.

Green Tea Extract

Green tea has many health benefits, and can help you burn fat thanks to more than just the caffeine.

Green tea contains substances known as catechins, and research has shown they stimulate fat loss in the body by inhibiting an enzyme that degrades the body's primary fat-burning hormone, norepinephrine. Further, studies have shown that catechins and caffeine work synergistically to increase the body's natural caloric burn.

If you're taking a fat burner that I recommend, then you're already getting enough green tea extract. But if you're not on a fat burner, then green tea extract in an inexpensive supplement that can help you achieve your weight loss goals.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The above supplements are the most commonly advertised and sold. You will undoubtedly run across other types as you browse the shelves at your local supplement and vitamin store. Do your wallet a favor and skip 'em all—especially the super-fancy sounding ones.

Stick to protein supplements, a pre-workout drink, creatine, glutamine, a mult-vitamin, and throw in CLA and green tea extract if you're cutting, and you'll be supplementing the smart way.

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THE *BIGGER LEANER STRONGER* SUPPLEMENT ROUTINE

Now that you know which supplements to take, let's go over how to take them.

Protein Supplement

I like to use protein supplements before and after workouts, and in between my whole food meals. There's no set rule as to when or how often you should be taking protein supplements, but I find my body does best if I give it at least three servings of whole food protein each day. I use protein supplements to get the rest of my daily protein.

Pre-Workout Drink

Take this about 30 minutes before your workout.

Creatine

It's common advice to "load" your body with creatine for the first week or so, taking as much as 20 – 40 grams. Whether this is actually necessary or not is argued by many experts, but studies have shown that whether you load or not, if you take enough creatine regularly over a substantial period of time, such as a month or two, it will have a positive effect.

I notice the effects of creatine faster when loading, so I here's how I do it:

For the first few days of supplementing creatine, "load up" with a very high dosage to saturate your muscles with it. To do this, you take 20 – 25 grams per day split up into 2 – 4 servings for the first 7 days of taking the supplement. I like to do 5 grams before lifting, 5 grams after, 5 grams with dinner, 5 grams with my mid-evening shake, and 5 grams with my final shake of the night.

After loading for the first week, you then lower the daily dosage to 5 – 10 grams per day. If you're taking it for the first time, start with 5 grams per day and see how you feel. If you're not noticing strength gains, bump it up to 10 grams per day and split it into two servings per day (5 grams before training and 5 grams after works well).

Many experts also talk about the need to "cycle" your creatine (take it for a few months, stop for a month or two, begin again, and so forth). The reason given for this is the claim that when you're supplementing creatine, your body reduces its own production. By cycling it, you give your body a chance to reset its own creatine production. While this may be true, I've yet to find any studies that support it. I don't cycle creatine—I simply take 5 grams per day, every day.

Always take a serving after training, when it will get sucked right into the muscles. If you're

doing 5 grams per day, do it after your workout. When loading, just make sure you get a serving after training.

Glutamine

Many guys miss out on the full benefits of glutamine simply because they don't take enough of it. Take 5 – 10 grams before training, 5 – 10 grams immediately after (you can just throw it in your post-workout shake), and 5 – 10 grams before bed.

If your protein supplement has glutamine added, see how much is in each serving and if you're getting 15 – 25 grams per day from it, then there's no need to supplement more. If you're not, then get a supplement and make up the deficit.

Nitric Oxide Supplements

If you want to try these out, just follow the instructions on the label.

Multi-Vitamin

Follow the instructions on the label. Most multis will have you take 1⁄2 of a serving with breakfast and 1⁄2 of a serving with dinner.

CLA

Studies have shown that doses of 4 – 7 grams per day are most effective.

You should spread this out over the course of the day, and take the pills on an empty stomach. (I take mine before breakfast, lunch, and dinner.)

Fat Burner

Simply follow the directions, which vary depending on which one you're taking.

Don't take more than one fat burner at a time—it'll put way too much stress on your system. Cut out all other caffeine from your diet when you're on fat burners, as you don't want to be consuming 500 mg of caffeine per day.

There are a couple good caffeine-free options for pre-workout energy, and you can find them on my website.

Green Tea Extract

Studies have shown that 400 – 600 mg of catechins per day is optimal. Take it on an empty stomach and you're good to go.

CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY

Just like training and diet, the most important aspect of supplementing is *consistency*. You must take your supplements consistently to realize the full benefits. You can't take creatine for a few days per week, forget on the other days, and expect much.

Fortunately, the supplements I recommend are easy to take in terms of schedule (a few times per day at the times when you are at home). But you need to make sure you follow the plan every day.

THE BOTTOM LINE

This chapter has just paid for the book probably a hundred times over (literally) because you're going to save *hundreds* of dollars each year (or more!) that you would've inevitably wasted on hyped up junk products (trust me—you would've fallen into the trap like we all have).

Instead, you're going to spend your money efficiently and only on what is proven to give real, lasting gains. Just like the training philosophy of *Bigger Leaner Stronger* is "most growth for your time and effort," the supplement philosophy is "most bang for your buck."

When you combine the simple supplement plan I just laid out with a complete, nutritious diet, you will enjoy maximum gains from your training.

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FROM HERE, YOUR BODY WILL CHANGE

So...I guess this is it, right? We've reached the end...

No way.

You're in a process now—and yup, it's *already* begun—of proving to yourself that you can transform your body faster than you ever believed. Within your first 3 – 4 months of training, you're going to know with *absolute certainty* that you can follow what you've learned in this book to build the body of your dreams.

It's pretty cool to realize that you *do* have the power to change your body—to get big, lean, strong, and healthy—and you are in control of your body, not the other way around.

No matter how "ordinary" you might think you are, I promise you that you can not only create an extraordinary body, but an extraordinary life as well. Don't be surprised if your newfound confidence and pride ripples out to affect other areas of your life too, inspiring you to reach for other goals and improve in other ways.

From here, all you have to do is walk the path I've laid out, and in twelve weeks, you'll look in the mirror and think, "I'm glad I did," not, "I wish I had."

My goal is to help you reach your goal, and I hope this book helps.

I want you to not only "get in shape" but to strive for achievements that you used to think impossible. I want you to be confident, happy, and in control.

If we work together as a team, we can and will succeed.

So, I'd like you to make a promise as you begin your transformation: Can you promise me—and yourself—that you'll let me know when you've reached your goal?

You can find my contact information at the end of the book!

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Q&A

Q: I can't find time to exercise, but I want to get into shape. What can I do?

A: I don't know anybody who can *find* time to exercise. I've never had anyone tell me, "Mike, I have too much free time these days. I think I'll just spend a few hours in the gym every day to get in shape. What should I do while I'm there?"

It's always the opposite: Most people lead busy, hectic lives, and they feel they don't have time for anything new. But that just isn't true. As much as most of us would like to *think* we're too busy to exercise, that's not the case.

People who have successfully transformed their bodies have only 24 hours in a day to do everything they need to do, just like you and me. And they have jobs, a family, a social life, and everything else to juggle. But here's the thing: They simply planned their days out and snuck in 45-60 minutes for exercise. Some watch an hour less of TV each night. Others wake up an hour early each day. Others get their spouses to handle their kids for an hour after dinner and use that time.

The point is that if you really want to work out the time, I'm positive you can do it.

Q: I travel a lot. Can I still follow this program properly?

A: Absolutely, but it requires that you *plan*. Stay at hotels that are close to an adequate gym (pretty much all hotel exercise facilities are inadequate for the type of training you'll be doing) and plan when you'll work out. For most travelers, this means early in the morning or after dinner. Bring your supplements with you and just follow your regular routine.

Following a diet can be a bit tougher when traveling, but it can still be done. Before arriving, I find a nearby health food store (like Whole Foods) and plan out what to eat while visiting. When I arrive, I go stock up on what I need. If living a healthy, fulfilling life is a high enough priority for you, you can absolutely make it work.

Q: I showed this book to a trainer, and he didn't like it and said I should do something else. Is he right?

A: I'm sure the trainer's heart is in the right place and he's just trying to help, but unfortunately most trainers just don't know what they're talking about. Most aren't even in great shape themselves and are just teaching whatever they learned in their textbooks without knowing if the methods they are teaching are actually the most effective or not.

If you follow what I wrote in this book, you *will* make awesome strength and size gains—I

guarantee you that. Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of guys around the world follow routines just like this, and their results speak for themselves.

Q: There are some huge guys in the gym that recommend that I do more reps than 6. What gives?

A: Well, as you know, the science isn't definitive on the "perfect" rep range for hypertrophy (muscle growth). What scientists can agree on is that somewhere between 4 – 8 reps is the sweet spot. In my experience, I've settled on 4 – 6 and have seen great results in myself, and scores of guys I've trained.

That being said, when you see huge guys doing high-rep routines, you're not seeing the whole picture. What's missing? *Drugs*.

That might sound a bit cynical, but it's true, unfortunately. Unless they're training to be powerlifters, guys on steroids do high-rep, low-weight (for them) routines for several reasons.

First, it helps prevent injury as steroids cause your muscles to grow much stronger than your tendons and ligaments can handle. Thus, you might feel like you can handle a 500lb Bench Press or Squat, but your tendons and ligaments can't, and a horrible injury can result.

Second, because, well...they can. When you're all drugged up, you can just go get a pump every day and grow.

Trust me—doing high-rep programs will NOT help you grow as a natural athlete, and steroids are NOT the way to go.

Q: How much weight can I gain or lose with this program and how quickly?

A: I've been helping people with this system for many years, and I believe that most people can gain or lose up to 25 pounds in their first 3 months. If you're gaining more than 2 pounds per week, chances are you're gaining more fat than is necessary. If you're losing more than 2 pounds per week, you may be losing muscle as well, which slows your metabolism down.

Q: I have a lot of trouble gaining muscle. Will this program work for me?

A: Absolutely. I don't believe in the "hardgainer" myth. In my many years in this game, I've never met a "hardgainer" that was actually training and eating properly. In most cases, they weren't lifting for maximum muscle gains and weren't eating enough (and sometimes this meant they had to eat 4,000 or more calories per day—but once they hit the right number, they always grew).

I promise you that if you train how I say to train and eat how I say to eat, you will gain muscle. End of story.

Q: I'm sick. Should I try to train anyway?

A: As much as you might want to, don't. I've made this mistake many times and it only drags the

sickness out. Just take it easy, get well, and get back on track.

Q: I have trouble with preparing healthy meals throughout the week. What should I do?

A: A simple solution is to prepare healthy meals on Sunday and bring them to work with you. Pop it in a toaster oven or microwave for a few minutes, and you're good to go.

Q: My out-of-shape friends always want me to eat unhealthy stuff with them. What should I do?

A: Don't fall into the trap that made them out of shape in the first place. When you eat with people who don't eat well, you should be careful to not use their poor habits as justification for you to follow suit.

You can also try to inspire them to join you in your quest for a healthier, more energetic, and better-looking body. Or, if necessary, only eat with them when you can have a cheat meal.

Q: I've been unable to stick with workout programs. Why should I even try yours?

A: Nothing is more annoying than working your butt off in the gym every day and seeing no results. This is, hands down, the number one reason why people quit their workout routines. Well, this program works. And, better yet, it works quickly.

Imagine if, in 3 months, you've put on 20 pounds of lean muscle and your friends and family keep commenting on how good you look. Girls start turning their heads. Guys you know are asking what in the world you're doing. You feel strong and energetic—better than you have in a long time.

Well, that's totally achievable. All you have to do is get started.

Q: I'm going to be out of town and won't have access to a gym. How should I eat?

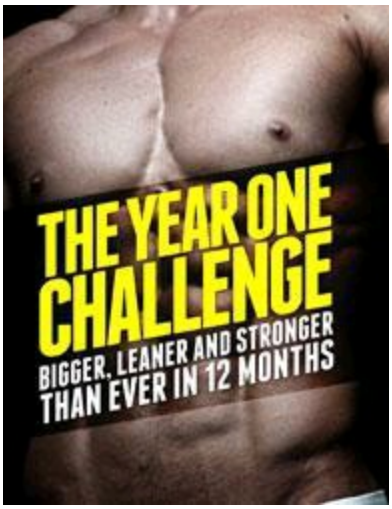
A: If your trip is going to be a week or less, just eat normally, as the effects of a week of no training are negligible.

If your trip is going to be longer than a week, however, then I recommend that you do a bodyweight routine, and try not to go overboard on the eating (I could tell you to work out your maintenance diet and follow that while you're gone, but that probably wouldn't be practical).

A simple routine you can do when on the road to maintain muscle mass is a circuit of pull-ups, push-up, and squats. Mine is very simple: I do as many pull-ups as I can, rest thirty seconds, and then do as many push-ups as I can, followed by a thirty-second rest and as many squats as I can do. I then rest three minutes and do it again. I do this circuit four to five times and I'm toast.

(To do this, I bring a dissembled pull-up bar and assemble it in my hotel room. You can find this on my website, www.buildhealthymuscle.com.)

BONUS REPORT



Exactly How to Train and Eat to Make Explosive Gains in Your First Year—People Won't Believe Their Eyes!

Would you like a full, detailed training program to follow for the next year to ensure that you get bigger, leaner, and stronger than ever?

You now know things that most guys will never understand about how to build a muscular, strong, and healthy body, but you might feel a bit unsure about how to work out a daily meal plan, or how you should combine different exercises.

Well, thanks to feedback from hundreds of readers, I created this totally free bonus report to help you out. In it, I cover things like...

• What brands of supplements I recommend and why. I've tried pretty much every brand you can name over the years, and have found what I feel are the best of the best for each type of supplement that I recommend.

• The workout equipment that is actually useful, and the brands that have stood the test of time for me. I've torn through gloves, tried all kinds of crappy straps, tried every body fat testing device you can buy, and even tried many types of shakers, and I want to save you the money and frustration of buying junk.

• The definitive answer to whether you should start by bulking or cutting. Don't get this wrong because you'll regret it later!

• Complete workout plans for your entire first year of training. All you'll have to do is show up every day and do what I say, and you'll build muscle faster than ever.

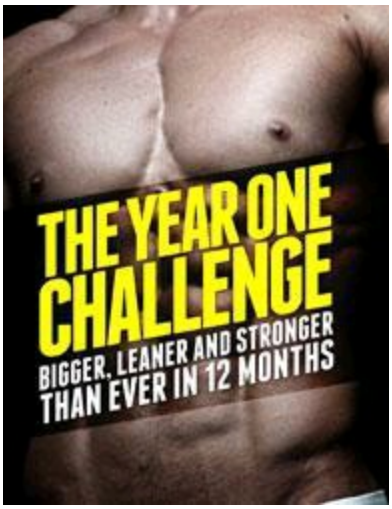
• 8 delicious recipes from my cookbook, *The Shredded Chef: 115 Recipes for Building Muscle, Getting Lean, and Staying Healthy.*

- And more!

By following this program, you're going to build a physique that you're proud of. It will be a trophy for your unswerving dedication, perseverance, and toughness.

My mission is to help you get to that moment. That's what makes me most happy.

Download this free special report today and make this next year the year where you get bigger, leaner, and stronger than ever!



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As you work toward your goals, however, you'll probably have questions or run into some difficulties. I'd like to be able to help you with these, so let's connect up! I don't charge for the help, of course, and I answer questions from readers every day.

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And last but not least, my website is www.buildhealthymuscle.com and if you want to write me, my email address is mike@buildhealthymuscle.com.

Thanks again, I hope to hear from you, and I wish you the best!

Mike

P.S. Turn to the next page to check out other books of mine that you might like!

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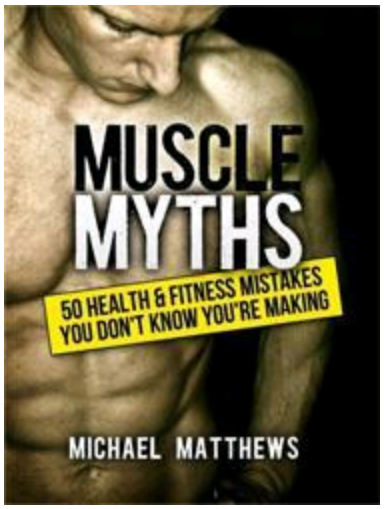

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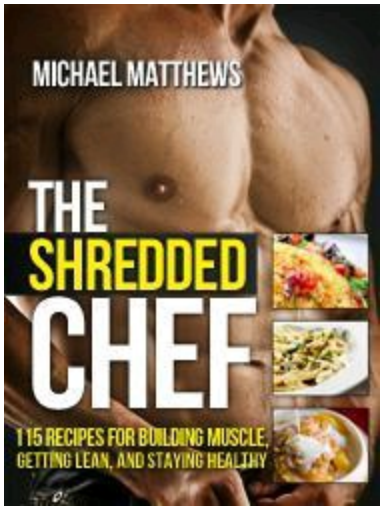

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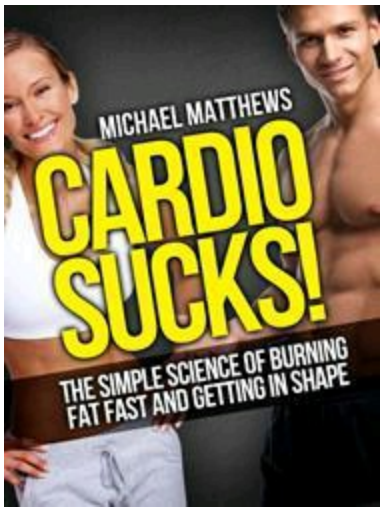

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If you're short on time and sick of the same old boring cardio routine and want to **kick your fat loss into high gear by working out less and...heaven forbid...actually have some fun...**then you want to read this new book.

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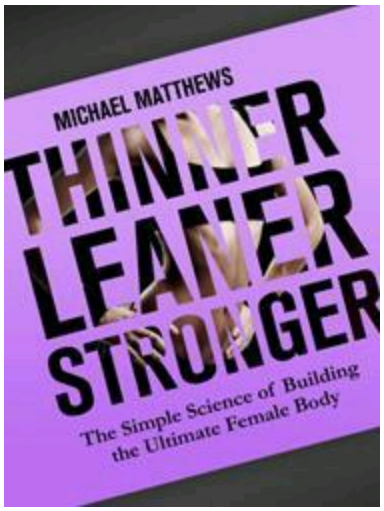

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If you want to be toned, lean, and strong as quickly as possible **without crash dieting, "good genetics," or wasting ridiculous amounts of time in the gym and money on supplements**...*regardless of your age*... then you want to read this book.

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