



NECK AND TRAP HYPERTROPHY
GUIDE

JEFF NIPPARD



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ABOUT ME

Jeff is a WNBFF Pro Drug-Free Bodybuilder and IPF/CPU Powerlifter in the 74 kg class. He earned the title of Mr. Junior Canada for natural bodybuilding in 2012 prior to which Jeff was a two-time Mr. Junior Newfoundland titleholder for 2009 and 2010.

As a powerlifter, Jeff has claimed a 502 lb squat, 336 lb bench press (2014 Canadian national record) and a 518 lb deadlift with an all time best Wilks score of 446.

With a Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry, Jeff has gathered the requisite scientific knowledge to compliment his practical experience acquired through training and coaching. Jeff worked as a coach with esteemed online coaching group The Strength Guys through 2014 and 2015 before branching out with STRCNG. Jeff has coached women's bikini and men's bodybuilding national and provincial champions, professional natural bodybuilders and nationally and IPF Worlds qualified raw powerlifters. He has presented seminars on block periodization, concurrent training and nutrition for natural bodybuilding in academic settings including the 2014 Online Fitness Summit and at the University of Iowa. Jeff has recorded interviews with some of the best in the business on his science-based fitness podcast IceCream4PRs.

Previously, Jeff was enrolled in the Doctor of Dental Surgery program at Dalhousie University where he completed two years of the program before deciding to instead pursue a career where his passions lie. He has aspirations of completing a PhD in exercise science or a related field.

Through his informative and personable Youtube channel and Instagram Jeff aims to share the knowledge he has gathered through university education and field experience with others who are passionate about bodybuilding, powerlifting and the science behind building muscle, losing fat and getting healthier.

Jeff currently lives in Kelowna, Canada while frequently visiting his girlfriend in Tampa, Florida, where he is coaching athletes around the world full-time while preparing for his next competition season in natural bodybuilding in 2018.



KEY TERMS

DB: DUMBBELL

EMG: ELECTROMYOGRAPHY

LSRPE: LAST SET RPE

MVC: MAXIMUM VOLUNTARY CONTRACTION

PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD: THE GRADUAL INCREASE OF STRESS PLACED UPON THE BODY DURING EXERCISE TRAINING

ROM: RANGE OF MOTION

RPE: RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION

TEMPO: THE SPEED AT WHICH THE LIFT OCCURS. TEMPO NOTATION IS GIVEN AS FOLLOWS: 4:3:2:1 WOULD MEAN A 4 SECOND ECCENTRIC, 3 SECOND PAUSE AT THE BOTTOM, 2 SECOND CONCENTRIC AND 1 SECOND PAUSE AT THE TOP. THE MOST COMMON TEMPO IN THIS PROGRAM IS 2:0:1:0.



FAQS

1. What if I am still sore? Should I train or take another rest day?

A: Training sore is fine unless it puts you at an increased risk of injury. If you're having a difficult time getting into position or completing a full ROM due to pain, do not train. Otherwise, still train but be sure to perform a slightly longer warm up for each exercise. Use your own discretion to avoid injury but training sore will not impair gains in and of itself.

2. What if I can't do rack pulls?

A: Do heavy barbell shrugs instead with good control. If barbell shrugs are still a problem, use a belt or try smith machine shrugs.

3. Should I use a belt for rack pulls?

A: I would recommend it for strength and safety, but it isn't required.

4. If the RPE increases across sets, should I drop the weight back?

A: If you hit failure prematurely, drop the weight back. Otherwise, select the weight as appropriate to hit the RPE for each set.

5. Why such little exercise variation from week to week?

A: Changing exercises from week to week is more likely to flatten out the progression curve. They do change slightly week to week and from Block 1 to Block 2, but the bulk of the program maintains the same exercise selection. This is to ensure progression by adding volume incrementally to these specific movements.

6. What is the LSRPE column for?

A: The idea here is to reflect on your last set and ask yourself how many more reps you think you could have gotten. It is a useful way to account for how hard you're working on the final set.



FAQS

7. Are upright rows safe to perform?

A: According to a 2011 paper by Schoenfeld et al, "Although the exercise has known benefits, execution is not without risk as a result of the exercise's propensity to produce subacromial impingement. This risk may be mitigated through instruction of the individual to avoid elevation of the elbows above the shoulder height. Those with existing subacromial impingement who have pain during performance of the upright row are advised to elevate to an angle below the shoulder height that does not provoke symptoms or to avoid the exercise altogether."¹ So in the case of pre-existing shoulder damage, I would advise against using the exercise. Otherwise, be careful not to load too heavily and keep the elbows below shoulder height at the top end of the range of motion and if performed properly and with good control, you should not experience shoulder pain. Of course, if pain does arise, stop immediately and use an alternative exercise.

8. What is a good alternative exercise for the upright row?

A: The best alternative to a barbell upright row is a rope upright row. If that still is questionable for you, then a rope facepull can be substituted.

9. Where can I buy a head harness?

A: Amazon. Here's one example: <https://www.amazon.com/Schiek-Adjustable-Nylon-Head-Harness/dp/B00IREYSWC>

Please direct all other questions to info@strcng.com.

BLOCK**1**

NECK AND TRAP GUIDE PROGRAM: WEEK 1

STRENGTH FOCUS

DAY 1	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
RACK PULLS	3	6-8		7.5	3.0				SET UP BARBELL AT JUST BELOW KNEE HEIGHT, USE STRAPS AND A BELT AS NEEDED
OVERHEAD SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				PALMS FACE ONE ANOTHER, SLIGHT BEND IN ELBOWS, SHRUG UP AND SLIGHTLY BACK
PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL	2	10-12		9	1.0				PLACE SHOULDERS ON THE EDGE OF BENCH, PLATE ON FOREHEAD, CURL THE WEIGHT WITH A CAREFUL, CONTROLLED CADENCE
HARNESS LOADED NECK EXTENSION	2	8-10		9	1.0				SIT ON EDGE OF BENCH, LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD AND PERFORM CONTROLLED EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

HYPERTROPHY FOCUS

DAY 2	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
UPRIGHT ROW	3	10-12		8	2.0				USE A 2X SHOULDER WIDTH GRIP AND PREVENT ELBOWS FROM EXCEEDING SHOULDER HEIGHT
MONKEY SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				SLIDE DUMBBELLS UP YOUR SIDES TO ABOUT WAIST HEIGHT SO YOUR ELBOWS ARE BENT AND PERFORM SHRUGS
PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL	2	12-15		9	1.0				SLIGHTLY LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN DAY 1, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS USING NECK ONLY, AVOID ARM INVOLVEMENT
PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	2	12-15		9	1.0				LIE FACE DOWN ON BENCH WITH SHOULDERS AT THE EDGE, LOAD PLATE ON BACK OF HEAD AND PERFORM EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

METABOLIC FOCUS

DAY 3	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG	3	15-20		8	3.0				GRIP BARBELL AT 1.5X SHOULDER WIDTH AND LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD, SHRUG STRAIGHT UP AND SQUEEZE EACH REP!
ROPE LYING SHRUG	2	15-20		9	1.0				PLACE ROPE OVERHEAD, GET AS CLOSE TO CABLE UPRIGHT AS POSSIBLE AND SHRUG DOWN AND BACK
PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL	2	15-20		9	1.0				SLIGHTLY LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN DAY 2, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS USING NECK ONLY, AVOID ARM INVOLVEMENT
PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	2	15-20		9	1.0				SLIGHTLY LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN DAY 2, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS USING NECK ONLY

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

WEEKLY VOLUME 29

BLOCK**1**

NECK AND TRAP GUIDE PROGRAM: WEEK 2

STRENGTH FOCUS

DAY 1	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
RACK PULLS	3	6-8		7.5	3.0				SET UP BARBELL AT JUST BELOW KNEE HEIGHT, USE STRAPS AND A BELT AS NEEDED
OVERHEAD SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				PALMS FACE ONE ANOTHER, SLIGHT BEND IN ELBOWS, SHRUG UP AND SLIGHTLY BACK
PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL	2	10-12		9	1.0				PLACE SHOULDERS ON THE EDGE OF BENCH, PLATE ON FOREHEAD, CURL THE WEIGHT WITH A CAREFUL, CONTROLLED CADENCE
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **HYPERTROPHY FOCUS**

DAY 2	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
UPRIGHT ROW	3	10-12		8	2.0				USE A 2X SHOULDER WIDTH GRIP AND PREVENT ELBOWS FROM EXCEEDING SHOULDER HEIGHT
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **METABOLIC FOCUS**

DAY 3	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG	3	15-20		8	3.0				GRIP BARBELL AT 1.5X SHOULDER WIDTH AND LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD, SHRUG STRAIGHT UP AND SQUEEZE EACH REP!
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PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	2	15-20		9	1.0				SLIGHTLY LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN DAY 2, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS USING NECK ONLY

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

WEEKLY VOLUME 29

BLOCK**1**

NECK AND TRAP GUIDE PROGRAM: WEEK 3

STRENGTH FOCUS

DAY 1	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
RACK PULLS	3	6-8		7.5	3.0				SET UP BARBELL AT JUST BELOW KNEE HEIGHT, USE STRAPS AND A BELT AS NEEDED
OVERHEAD SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				PALMS FACE ONE ANOTHER, SLIGHT BEND IN ELBOWS, SHRUG UP AND SLIGHTLY BACK
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **HYPERTROPHY FOCUS**

DAY 2	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
UPRIGHT ROW	3	10-12		8	2.0				USE A 2X SHOULDER WIDTH GRIP AND PREVENT ELBOWS FROM EXCEEDING SHOULDER HEIGHT
MONKEY SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				SLIDE DUMBBELLS UP YOUR SIDES TO ABOUT WAIST HEIGHT SO YOUR ELBOWS ARE BENT AND PERFORM SHRUGS
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PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	2	12-15		9	1.0				LIE FACE DOWN ON BENCH WITH SHOULDERS AT THE EDGE, LOAD PLATE ON BACK OF HEAD AND PERFORM EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **METABOLIC FOCUS**

DAY 3	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG	3	15-20		8	3.0				GRIP BARBELL AT 1.5X SHOULDER WIDTH AND LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD, SHRUG STRAIGHT UP AND SQUEEZE EACH REP!
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PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	3	15-20		9	1.0				SLIGHTLY LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN DAY 2, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS USING NECK ONLY

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

WEEKLY VOLUME 33

BLOCK**1**

NECK AND TRAP GUIDE PROGRAM: WEEK 4

STRENGTH FOCUS

DAY 1	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
RACK PULLS	3	6-8		7.5	3.0				SET UP BARBELL AT JUST BELOW KNEE HEIGHT, USE STRAPS AND A BELT AS NEEDED
OVERHEAD SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				PALMS FACE ONE ANOTHER, SLIGHT BEND IN ELBOWS, SHRUG UP AND SLIGHTLY BACK
PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL	3	10-12		9	1.0				PLACE SHOULDERS ON THE EDGE OF BENCH, PLATE ON FOREHEAD, CURL THE WEIGHT WITH A CAREFUL, CONTROLLED CADENCE
HARNESS LOADED NECK EXTENSION	3	8-10		9	1.0				SIT ON EDGE OF BENCH, LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD AND PERFORM CONTROLLED EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **HYPERTROPHY FOCUS**

DAY 2	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
UPRIGHT ROW	3	10-12		8	2.0				USE A 2X SHOULDER WIDTH GRIP AND PREVENT ELBOWS FROM EXCEEDING SHOULDER HEIGHT
MONKEY SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				SLIDE DUMBBELLS UP YOUR SIDES TO ABOUT WAIST HEIGHT SO YOUR ELBOWS ARE BENT AND PERFORM SHRUGS
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PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	2	12-15		9	1.0				LIE FACE DOWN ON BENCH WITH SHOULDERS AT THE EDGE, LOAD PLATE ON BACK OF HEAD AND PERFORM EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **METABOLIC FOCUS**

DAY 3	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG	3	15-20		8	3.0				GRIP BARBELL AT 1.5X SHOULDER WIDTH AND LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD, SHRUG STRAIGHT UP AND SQUEEZE EACH REP!
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

WEEKLY VOLUME 33

BLOCK**2**

NECK AND TRAP GUIDE PROGRAM: WEEK 5

STRENGTH FOCUS

DAY 1	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
RACK PULLS	3	6-8		7.5	3.0				SET UP BARBELL AT JUST BELOW KNEE HEIGHT, USE STRAPS AND A BELT AS NEEDED
OVERHEAD SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				PALMS FACE ONE ANOTHER, SLIGHT BEND IN ELBOWS, SHRUG UP AND SLIGHTLY BACK
PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL	3	10-12		9	1.0				PLACE SHOULDERS ON THE EDGE OF BENCH, PLATE ON FOREHEAD, CURL THE WEIGHT WITH A CAREFUL, CONTROLLED CADENCE
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **HYPERTROPHY FOCUS**

DAY 2	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
UPRIGHT ROW	3	10-12		8	2.0				USE A 2X SHOULDER WIDTH GRIP AND PREVENT ELBOWS FROM EXCEEDING SHOULDER HEIGHT
LATERAL RAISE	3	12-15		9	1.0				SQUEEZE TRAPS AT THE TOP OF EACH MOVEMENT
PLATE LOADED LATERAL NECK CURL	3	12-15		9	1.0				LIGHT WEIGHT, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS
PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	2	12-15		9	1.0				LIE FACE DOWN ON BENCH WITH SHOULDERS AT THE EDGE, LOAD PLATE ON BACK OF HEAD AND PERFORM EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **METABOLIC FOCUS**

DAY 3	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG	3	15-20		8	3.0				GRIP BARBELL AT 1.5X SHOULDER WIDTH AND LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD, SHRUG STRAIGHT UP AND SQUEEZE EACH REP!
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

WEEKLY VOLUME 33

BLOCK**2**

NECK AND TRAP GUIDE PROGRAM: WEEK 6

STRENGTH FOCUS

DAY 1	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
RACK PULLS	3	6-8		7.5	3.0				SET UP BARBELL AT JUST BELOW KNEE HEIGHT, USE STRAPS AND A BELT AS NEEDED
OVERHEAD SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				PALMS FACE ONE ANOTHER, SLIGHT BEND IN ELBOWS, SHRUG UP AND SLIGHTLY BACK
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

HYPERTROPHY FOCUS

DAY 2	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
UPRIGHT ROW	3	10-12		8	2.0				USE A 2X SHOULDER WIDTH GRIP AND PREVENT ELBOWS FROM EXCEEDING SHOULDER HEIGHT
LATERAL RAISE	3	12-15		9	1.0				SQUEEZE TRAPS AT THE TOP OF EACH MOVEMENT
PLATE LOADED LATERAL NECK CURL	3	12-15		9	1.0				LIGHT WEIGHT, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS
PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	2	12-15		9	1.0				LIE FACE DOWN ON BENCH WITH SHOULDERS AT THE EDGE, LOAD PLATE ON BACK OF HEAD AND PERFORM EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

METABOLIC FOCUS

DAY 3	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG	3	15-20		8	3.0				GRIP BARBELL AT 1.5X SHOULDER WIDTH AND LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD, SHRUG STRAIGHT UP AND SQUEEZE EACH REP!
ROPE FACEPULL	2	15-20		9	1.0				PLACE ROPE OVERHEAD, GET AS CLOSE TO CABLE UPRIGHT AS POSSIBLE AND SHRUG DOWN AND BACK
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PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	3	15-20		9	1.0				SLIGHTLY LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN DAY 2, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS USING NECK ONLY

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

WEEKLY VOLUME 33

BLOCK**2**

NECK AND TRAP GUIDE PROGRAM: WEEK 7

STRENGTH FOCUS

DAY 1	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
RACK PULLS	3	6-8		7.5	3.0				SET UP BARBELL AT JUST BELOW KNEE HEIGHT, USE STRAPS AND A BELT AS NEEDED
OVERHEAD SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				PALMS FACE ONE ANOTHER, SLIGHT BEND IN ELBOWS, SHRUG UP AND SLIGHTLY BACK
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

HYPERTROPHY FOCUS

DAY 2	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
UPRIGHT ROW	3	10-12		8	2.0				USE A 2X SHOULDER WIDTH GRIP AND PREVENT ELBOWS FROM EXCEEDING SHOULDER HEIGHT
LATERAL RAISE	3	12-15		9	1.0				SQUEEZE TRAPS AT THE TOP OF EACH MOVEMENT
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PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	3	12-15		9	1.0				LIE FACE DOWN ON BENCH WITH SHOULDERS AT THE EDGE, LOAD PLATE ON BACK OF HEAD AND PERFORM EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

METABOLIC FOCUS

DAY 3	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG	3	15-20		8	3.0				GRIP BARBELL AT 1.5X SHOULDER WIDTH AND LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD, SHRUG STRAIGHT UP AND SQUEEZE EACH REP!
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*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

WEEKLY VOLUME 35

BLOCK**2**

NECK AND TRAP GUIDE PROGRAM: WEEK 8

STRENGTH FOCUS

DAY 1	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
RACK PULLS	3	6-8		7.5	3.0				SET UP BARBELL AT JUST BELOW KNEE HEIGHT, USE STRAPS AND A BELT AS NEEDED
OVERHEAD SHRUG	3	12-15		9	1.0				PALMS FACE ONE ANOTHER, SLIGHT BEND IN ELBOWS, SHRUG UP AND SLIGHTLY BACK
PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL	3	10-12		9	1.0				PLACE SHOULDERS ON THE EDGE OF BENCH, PLATE ON FOREHEAD, CURL THE WEIGHT WITH A CAREFUL, CONTROLLED CADENCE
HARNESS LOADED NECK EXTENSION	3	8-10		9	1.0				SIT ON EDGE OF BENCH, LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD AND PERFORM CONTROLLED EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **HYPERTROPHY FOCUS**

DAY 2	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
UPRIGHT ROW	3	10-12		8	2.0				USE A 2X SHOULDER WIDTH GRIP AND PREVENT ELBOWS FROM EXCEEDING SHOULDER HEIGHT
LATERAL RAISE	3	12-15		9	1.0				SQUEEZE TRAPS AT THE TOP OF EACH MOVEMENT
PLATE LOADED LATERAL NECK CURL	3	12-15		9	1.0				LIGHT WEIGHT, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS
PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	3	12-15		9	1.0				LIE FACE DOWN ON BENCH WITH SHOULDERS AT THE EDGE, LOAD PLATE ON BACK OF HEAD AND PERFORM EXTENSIONS

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME: **METABOLIC FOCUS**

DAY 3	SETS	REPS	%1RM	RPE	REST	1	2	3	NOTES
WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG	3	15-20		8	3.0				GRIP BARBELL AT 1.5X SHOULDER WIDTH AND LEAN SLIGHTLY FORWARD, SHRUG STRAIGHT UP AND SQUEEZE EACH REP!
ROPE FACEPULL	3	15-20		9	1.0				PLACE ROPE OVERHEAD, GET AS CLOSE TO CABLE UPRIGHT AS POSSIBLE AND SHRUG DOWN AND BACK
PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL	2	15-20		9	1.0				SLIGHTLY LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN DAY 2, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS USING NECK ONLY, AVOID ARM INVOLVEMENT
PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION	3	15-20		9	1.0				SLIGHTLY LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN DAY 2, SMOOTH AND CONTROLLED REPS USING NECK ONLY

*NOTE: REST TIMES ARE GIVEN IN MINUTES.

TOTAL TRAINING TIME:

WEEKLY VOLUME 35



WARM UP

If you plan on training neck/traps “cold” (i.e. not after a regular workout), before every training session perform:

- 5-10 minutes of moderate intensity cardio
- Dynamic stretches such as arm swings and circles for 15-20 reps

Otherwise, you should be sufficiently warm from the preceding training to jump right into the direct neck/trap dynamic warm up below.

Perform the following short dynamic warm up routine before jumping into the neck/trap work:

- 10-15 head circles
- 10-15 lateral neck bends (go slow)
- 10-15 front/back neck bends (go slow)

Before the first “main heavy” exercise for each bodypart:

- Pyramid up in weight with 1-2 light sets, getting progressively heavier
- Such a warm up is only required for the first “heavy” exercise for each bodypart.



PROGRAM VARIABLES

INTENSITY

How hard should you train? How heavy should you go?

The answers to these questions are determined by the RPE given for each exercise. Keep in mind that RPE's are meant to be for working sets only. An RPE of 10 indicates the set should be taken to failure. An RPE of 9 means you should stop one rep shy of failure. An RPE of 8 means you should stop two reps shy of failure and so on. RPE's provided are intended to be applied to all working sets except for when the training day is annotated with a note indicating that the final set of each exercises is to be taken to failure.

VOLUME

How much volume you need to progress will depend on your level of advancement. The more advanced you are, the more volume you will need. Despite the limited amount of research on the topic, 15-18 weekly sets for the traps and 10-12 weekly sets for the neck should be plenty to optimize progress, even in intermediate-advanced trainees. Because the literature has shown impressive results from just 9 weekly sets of added neck extensions², simply adding in just 3 sets, 3x per week of direct neck work will help improve its size and strength, however that may not be enough to maximize its potential for growth.

Beware of the fact that there is a strong overlap between any heavy rowing and deadlifting and the trap-specific movements included in this program. So if the current program you're running has a high volume of these movements already included, it may be wise to adjust the shrugging and upright rowing volume down by 1-3 sets per week, depending on your own assessment of your recovery. Consistent and recurring soreness, achy joints and fatigue is generally a reliable indication that you may be performing too much volume and may want to adjust the routine accordingly. Furthermore, if you're a relatively new lifter, you may want to start with one less set per movement for the first week or two. From there, you can assess your tolerance to that weekly volume and then begin adding sets once you're confident you're recovering adequately.

FREQUENCY

The most recent and comprehensive meta analysis on training frequency concluded that 2x/week is better than 1x/week for maximizing growth while frequencies of 3 or more may or may not be better³. However, because the upper traps and the muscles of the neck are smaller muscles with arguably faster recovery rates, a 3 day per



PROGRAM VARIABLES

week frequency is likely to be more optimal than a lower frequency which would make squeezing in sufficient weekly volume difficult. This frequency should be easy to adapt to an upper/lower, push/pull/legs or other bodypart split, examples of which are provided in the “Sample Training Splits” section.

PERIODIZATION

WEEKLY PROGRESSION

A linear progression scheme is used for all exercises since progressive overload is arguably the most important factor for growth. The goal is to add reps while keeping the weight the same until the top end of the range is reached for all sets. From there, you will add weight and go back to the low end of the rep range. In the real world, it might not work out that neatly. As long as you’re adding some weight or some reps over time on average (meaning it doesn’t have to increase EVERY week) you’re doing it right.

DAILY UNDULATING PERIODIZATION

An undulating scheme is used for reps during the training week such that Day 1 focuses more on heavy loading in lower rep ranges, Day 2 focuses on moderate loading and hypertrophy and Day 3 is a high-rep training session, focused on metabolic stress.

BLOCK PERIODIZATION

The program is split into 2 blocks: Weeks 1-4 and Weeks 5-8.

Block 1 is focused on getting adapted to the new movement patterns, learning the exercises with proper form, and feeling out the relatively high volume and frequency of the program. In order to ensure this happens safely and without undesired overreaching, RPE’s are kept generally between 7-9 for this block.

Block 2 is quite similar in exercise selection to ensure progressive overload is in place. Volume is increased in Block 2 through gradual set increases. This block also introduces several new movements and loading for the sake of novelty, something that has been emphasized in the scientific literature as a central tenant of periodization⁴.



PROGRAM VARIABLES

STEP PERIODIZATION

WEEKS 1 AND 2:

- Weekly set volume for traps and neck is 29 sets

WEEKS 3 AND 4:

- A step in volume is made to 33 total weekly sets

Weeks 5 and 6:

- Weekly volume is kept stable at 33 sets per muscle
- An increase in loading is emphasized for progress

Weeks 7 and 8:

- Another step in volume is made to 35 sets for each muscle
- Loading continues
- These final weeks will provide the biggest growth stimulus
- Should be followed up with a week off (unload) or a light week (deload) to re-sensitize the muscles for new hypertrophy
- Optionally repeat the program following unloading or deloading

NECK

It's important to understand the biomechanical function of the neck before we can understand how to best train it. So first, we need to quickly cover its basic anatomy. For the sake of the guide, we'll be treating the traps separately, although they do function at the neck, working in concert with other neck muscles.

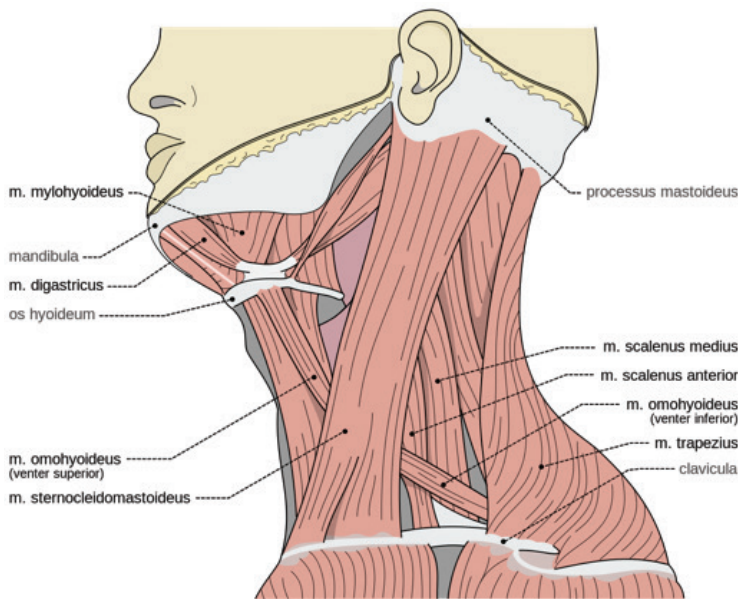


FIGURE 1: MUSCLES OF THE NECK

(Image: By Olek Remesz. Own work based on picture from Grey's Anatomy.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Rocket000/SVGs/Biology/Human_anatomy)

ANATOMY & FUNCTION

The most forceful muscle on the front of the neck is the **sternocleidomastoid**, which is a two headed muscle that wraps around the side of the neck as well, originating on the sternum and the clavicle and inserting on the mastoid process of the temporal bone near the back of the skull. It functions to flex the neck forward (like in a neck curl), flex the neck laterally and rotate the head.

Also on the side of the neck are three scalene muscles that originate on different cervical vertebrae and insert on the first and second ribs. They collectively function to laterally flex the neck.

On the back of the neck the biggest muscle is the **trapezius**, which is separated into 3 distinct regions:

1. The upper traps originate at the occipital bone on the back of the head and fan out and down to insert on the outer part of the clavicle. They contract to perform primarily scapular elevation (like shrugging) but also neck extension, lateral flexion, and rotation.



NECK

2. The fibers of the mid traps run straight across, and contract to perform primarily scapular retraction, like in a barbell row.
3. The lower fibers perform scapular depression and retraction. Keep in mind that all of these muscles tend to work as a unit, not in isolation.

Also on the back of the neck are the **splenius muscles**. The splenius capitis is the biggest of the two and is the prime mover for neck extension. A large degree of the size built on the back of the neck will come from hypertrophy of this muscle. The splenius cervicis which also extends the neck, flexes the neck laterally and rotates the head.

The **levator scapulae** is another, smaller muscle that works in concert with the upper traps to elevate the scapulae. Since it runs deeper to the trap fibers, it won't contribute as much to increasing the size of the neck.

There are many other smaller muscles that run down the back of the neck, that while important functionally, won't contribute as much as the other muscles to the appearance of large-scale neck hypertrophy such as the semispinalis, multifidus, longissimus and others that all help to extend the neck, but we won't focus on these in this training guide.

NECK

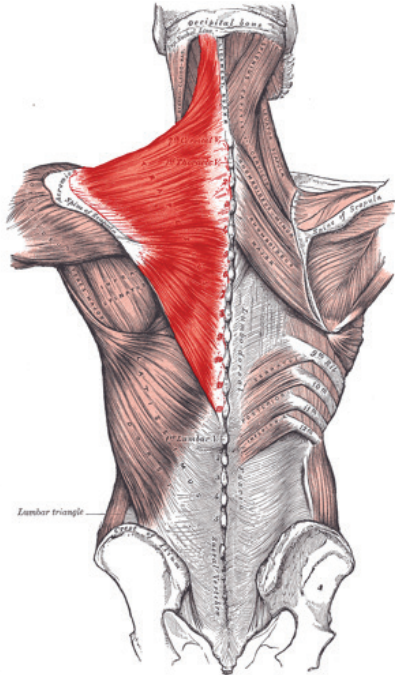


FIGURE 2: MUSCLES OF THE NECK

(Image: By Olek Remesz. Own work based on picture from Grey's Anatomy.)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Rocket000/SVGs/Biology/Human_anatomy)

FIBER TYPE

While data is really limited, some data suggests that the traps are slightly type II dominant in strength trained athletes.⁵ This implies that they could benefit from at least some heavy or explosive training styles which may explain in part why heavy deadlifts and rack pulls have been so successful anecdotally for trap development. While the relevant data isn't easily available or accessible for the neck muscles, it makes sense to train the neck in a moderate to high rep range for the sake of safety and since, provided sets are taken close to failure, a near-full spectrum of motor units should be activated anyway.



TRAPS AND NECK

BACKGROUND

It's common to hear that as long as you do heavy compound movements like deadlifts and bent rows, your traps and neck muscles will grow just fine. But the research doesn't support this contention². While the isometric contractions seen with these movements certainly activate the trap muscles, it may not be enough to truly maximize growth given the absence of eccentric muscle actions. Furthermore, it seems that the muscles of the neck aren't trained with sufficient intensity to elicit significant hypertrophy from traditional compound movements alone and according to Conley et al, adding direct neck isolation work is important for growth².

The program in this guide is filled with a variety of movements that utilize basic principles of biomechanics and anatomy, while using different loading schemes and patterns as needed to hit total weekly volume targets.

TRAP EXERCISES EXPLAINED

1. RACK PULLS: EMG data from Carb et al showed that upper trap muscle activity was 97% at the point of knee passage vs just 88% off the floor, indicating that training the top half of the deadlift by doing rack pulls may be better for optimizing upper trap recruitment⁶. Given that they're also easier to recover from and interfere less with other lower body exercises, it's an obvious choice for trap specialization.

2. OVERHEAD SHRUG: A landmark 1994 study by Johnson and colleagues found that because of the orientation of the upper trap fibers, they can't effectively elevate the scapula when the upper arm is neutral, suggesting that the shrug is best executed with the arms in at least 30 degrees abduction⁷. Shrugging with the arms directly overhead is the most "extreme" version of the wide grip shrug, with the arms fully abducted overhead. Specialist sports physiotherapist Adam Meakins has found this movement to be very effective in clinical practice⁸, with one 2016 paper showing it to elicit high levels of EMG activation⁹.

3. UPRIGHT ROW: A 2005 study by Handa et al showed the upright row to outperform the seated cable row, barbell row and lat pulldown in terms of EMG activation¹⁰. A 2x shoulder width grip on the barbell upright row has been shown to increase activation of both the upper and mid traps relative to a narrow and shoulder width grip¹¹. To avoid shoulder impingement issues, it's advised to keep elbow elevation below shoulder height. This exercise can also be performed on the cable machine using a rope.



TRAPS AND NECK

4. MONKEY SHRUG: Similar to the Overhead Shrug, this movement places the upper arm in about 30 degrees abduction, which has strong anatomical support for increasing upper trap involvement. Because the biceps have to work to keep the elbows flexed and held at the sides, this movement should be loaded much less heavily than the traditional dumbbell shrug.

5. WIDE GRIP BARBELL SHRUG: Because of the ability to load heavily, this movement is very conducive to steady progressive overload, making it a good adjunct to the Rack Pull exercise. Again, because abduction leads to greater upper trap involvement a wide grip at roughly 1.5x shoulder width is used.

6. ROPE LYING SHRUG: This exercise is a personal favorite of mine and has seen impressive in-field success with my athletes. If nothing else, having the arms up overhead will load the traps from a slightly different plane and pattern from the other shrugging variations included in the program.

7. ROPE FACEPULL: In Block 2 of the program, the rope facepull is introduced as a very effective and time-tested mid-trap movement. This exercise should be thought of more as a rope “high row” as you forcefully squeeze your shoulder blades together at the top of each rep.

8. LATERAL RAISE: Also in Block 2, the lateral raise is introduced as a trap movement based on EMG data showing it to yield high levels of trap activation¹². To emphasize the traps over the side delts, think about lifting your shoulders up as you complete the raise and squeeze at the top for 0.5-1 seconds.

NECK EXERCISES EXPLAINED

1. PLATE LOADED FORWARD NECK CURL: This exercise is the most frequent in the program simply because it's so effective at recruiting the muscles on the front and side of the neck and it is very user friendly. All you need to perform it is a plate and a bench.

2. PLATE LOADED NECK EXTENSION: Similar to the plate loaded neck curl, this movement's ease of use and established track record both in the literature and in-field make it a main movement for developing the muscles on the back of the neck, including the upper traps and splenius muscles.



TRAPS AND NECK

3. HARNESS LOADED NECK EXTENSION: Because this movement can be more comfortably loaded than the plate loaded extension, it is included on strength-focused days as a “main heavy movement” for the rear neck musculature. If you don’t have access to a harness, plate loaded or partner-assisted neck extensions can be used as a substitute for the same sets and reps.

4. PLATE LOADED LATERAL NECK CURL: This exercise is included in Block 2 to help isolate some of the smaller muscles on the side of the neck such as the scalenes and to train the lateral flexion component of the sternocleidomastoid. Because forward flexion movements will hit these muscles as well, lateral flexion isn’t a main focus of the program, but is included in Block 2 for the sake of variety and completeness.



SAMPLE TRAINING SPLITS

As long as total weekly volume requirements are being met and you are recovering adequately (i.e. not excessively fatigued, sore and/or getting weaker) then how you set up your split around this program is of relatively less importance.

Below are some suggested splits including how to incorporate the neck and trap program.

1. UPPER/LOWER SPLIT

Day 1: Upper body + **Day 1**
Day 2: Rest
Day 3: Lower Body
Day 4: Upper Body + **Day 2**
Day 5: Rest
Day 6: Lower Body + **Day 3**
Day 7: Rest

2. PUSH/PULL/LEGS/UPPER/LOWER SPLIT

Day 1: Push + **Day 1**
Day 2: Pull
Day 3: Legs + **Day 2**
Day 4: Rest
Day 5: Upper + **Day 3**
Day 6: Lower
Day 7: Rest



SAMPLE TRAINING SPLITS

3. PUSH/PULL/LEGS SPLIT (8-9 DAY SPLIT)

Day 1: Push + **Day 1**

Day 2: Pull

Day 3: Legs + **Day 2**

Day 4: (Optional rest)

Day 5: Push

Day 6: Pull + **Day 3**

Day 7: Legs

Day 8: Rest

I would personally recommend running split #1 or 2 on this program for the sake of optimizing frequency and the convenience of fitting your full split within a single calendar week. The extra training days in split #3 allow for adequate recovery between sessions, however, the weekly frequency may be slightly sub-optimal. Given this, if this split allows you to train with either more intensity (effort) or with better adherence than the others, then you should go with it. Remember that regardless of the split you choose, the most important thing is accomplishing the weekly neck and trap training volume with the appropriate intensity (RPE).

An important consideration in the training split is where the heavy rack pulls should be placed. I'd recommend spacing Day 1 apart from leg training sessions by at least one full rest day, if possible.



COMMENTS FROM JEFF

For customer support email info@strcng.com.

Please free free to forward any “before” and “after” photos to info@strcng.com including neck measurements - I would really appreciate it!

To keep the cost of the program down, I did not include supplemental instructional videos for this program. If you’re unsure about how to perform any exercises included, access to all exercises are just a quick Google/YouTube search away!

Thank you so much for your support! Enjoy training and feel free to show me your progress on social media by hashtagging **#neckgains** and I’ll make sure to check it out! Peace!



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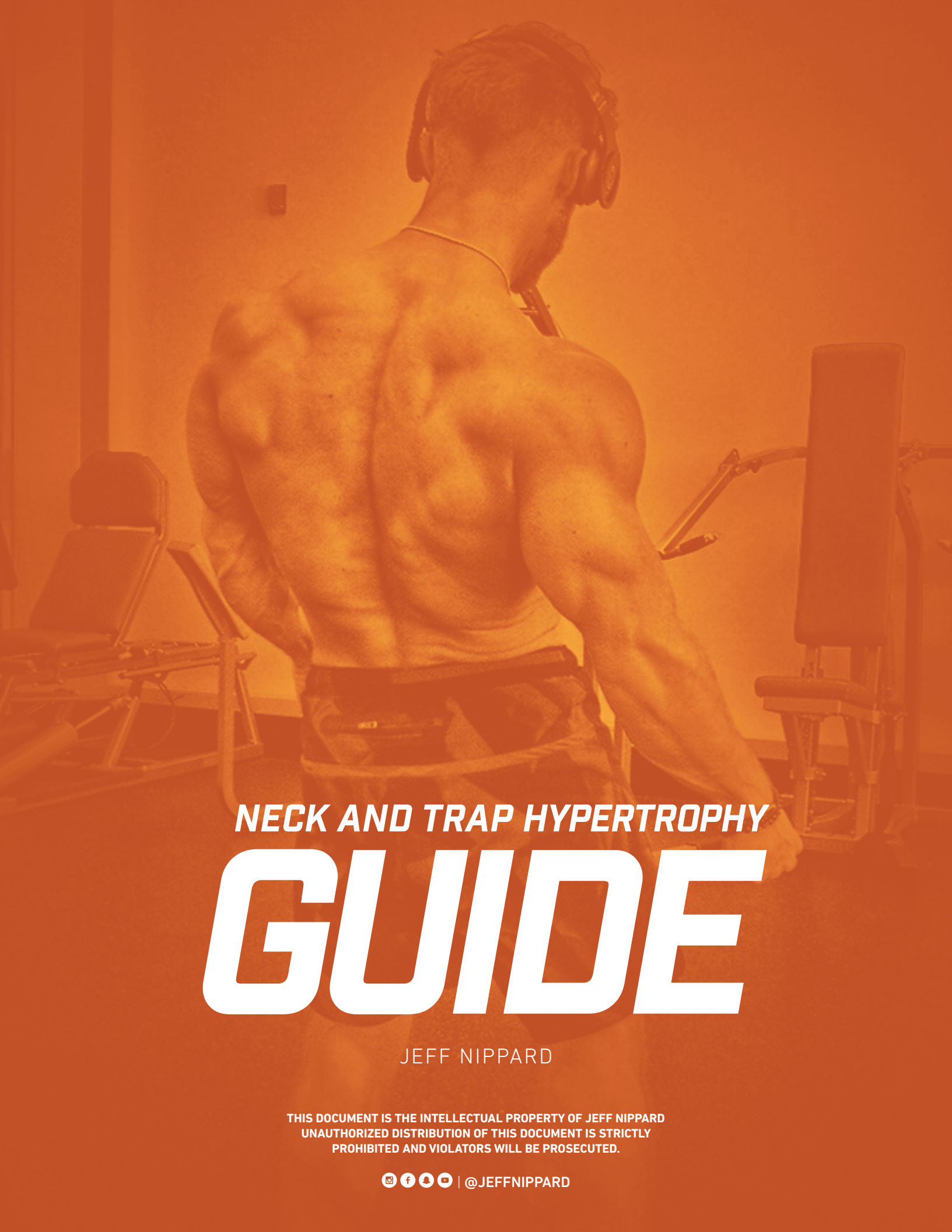
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DISCLAIMER

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NECK AND TRAP HYPERTROPHY
GUIDE

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