

INTERMEDIATE HYPERTROPHY PROGRAM

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LET THE
GAINS
BEGIN!



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MOUNTAIN DOG INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM

WARLOCK

You may remember Warlock from the comics if you are a geek like me. He was a very prominent figure in the Infinity Gauntlet stories with Thanos, and many other storylines that happened after Thanos was destroyed, which you probably saw at the movies. He somehow never made it into the movies though, despite the fact he was the key figure in stopping Thanos. His story is one of my favorites. He was created by a group of scientists to be the perfect human. I use the term human loosely because he controlled cosmic energy, always came back from the dead, traveled time, and all kinds of other cool stuff. He also took possession of the Infinity Gauntlet once and he actually separated all the goodness and evil from himself so that became only driven by logic. I am sure the evidenced based crowd like this! Anyways, it's a great story if you look it up, and I know that sometimes we focus on programs for beginners or advanced folks, and the intermediates get left behind like Warlock was, so this one is for you!

Thank you so much for purchasing this program. My assumption is that you have put in your first year of training and are ready to take things up a notch! If that is the case, this program is for you!

Much of what is below is covered in the novice training program. I wanted you to see it, so you can see how I built upon the foundation that I taught in that program. Much of the foundational principles remain the same. We continue to fine tune them, and we also now take your intensity up in your training. Many of you are coaches, and my thought was this would help you as well in your education of your clients.

Get ready for ***“Warlock”***

THE TOP 3 THINGS YOU HAVE TO MASTER

Much of this is the same material we had in the novice program if you have not seen these. Here's the thing, all three of these factors are still high priority! This is no time to slack on any of these.

1) Lifting Technique/Form

It doesn't matter how hard you train if your form is poor. That is the first key to weight training. You must use lifting technique that ensures stress is directed to the muscles you are trying to work. This will also greatly reduce your risk of injury. Poor form will likely slow down muscle growth and will eventually catch up to you in the form of some sort of injury. Even though you are relatively new to weight training, it's NEVER too early to think about longevity and health. Both factors should be high priorities for you throughout your training career.

There are a lot of little things, just form tweaks, that make a massive difference in how well you "feel" your muscles work. I made a YouTube series that lays out many of these things that I have learned over the last 30 years. Some of these techniques are for more advanced trainees, such as the partials, but again the little form tweaks are worth their weight in gold and will "advance" your exercise execution knowledge rapidly.

Make sure you check these links out. I am confident these will help you tremendously!

As an intermediate now, much of this will start to become second nature. That is the goal! Remember perfect practice makes for perfect execution.

Back - [📺 21 Reasons Why Your Back Isn't Growing \(FIX IT FAST\)](#)

Chest - [📺 21 Reasons Why Your Chest Isn't Growing \(FIX IT NOW\)](#)

Biceps - [▶ 21 Reasons Why Your Biceps Aren't Growing \(FIX IT FAST\)](#)

Triceps - [▶ 21 Reasons Your Triceps Won't Grow \(Fix for Massive Arms\)](#)

Shoulders - [▶ 21 Reasons Your Shoulders Won't Grow \(Simple Fix\)](#)

Calves - [▶ 21 Reasons You Don't Have Big Calves "Trigger MASSIVE Growth"](#)

Quads/Hams - [▶ 21 Reasons Why Your Legs Aren't Growing](#)

Also, as you work through the program there are often YouTube links that are specific to what you are doing as well. These will describe specific form, for specific exercises. I will be right there beside you helping you execute perfectly, via these vids!

2) Mind to Muscle Connection

Mind to muscle connection is this idea that you can mentally focus on a particular muscle, and thus activate more of its fibers and "feel" it better as you train it. This is something that has been preached by the bodybuilding community for many decades. Up to date research from experts like Brad Schoenfeld confirm there is in fact legit science to back this. This is an interesting topic that I discuss in my seminars. There are basically two types of "attentional focus" – internal and external. Internal is when you think about the actual body part you are training. You might think about squeezing your biceps as you curl for example. Research here has shown that you get greater muscle activation doing this, that's a good thing! It means more muscle fibers are firing. External focus is a little different. You think more about your environment such as the bar moving fast through a lift. Research on this has shown that you can actually produce more force thinking this way, pretty cool also, and can come in handy doing compound movements!

This aspect is something that you will also get better and better at over the course of many years. I still work on improving how

I "feel" exercises after 34 years of training and also moving the bar with authority! The nice thing is, the better you get at this, the more effective your training becomes. You get more out of each set stressing the muscles you want to stress!

When you do compound movements like squats or bench presses, you work a lot of different muscle groups simultaneously, and that is great! We call that getting more bang for your buck. When we include exercises that focus on one single muscle for the most part, we call those isolation movements. These make it easier to learn how to feel a specific muscle contracting. I include some isolation work to allow you to practice this internal focus and master it. Therefore, I think beginners should follow a mix of compound movements and isolation exercises. Many "experts" think you should only focus on compound movements, but if your goal is to develop muscle, using isolation movements is a short cut. Remember, the better you get at these, the more stress you can apply to the target muscle via better muscle activation.

As an intermediate you continue to focus on making this aspect better and better. You are probably finding some body parts come easier than others now, and that some exercises come easier than others. This is natural. My back took me probably 15 years to feel it to where I felt happy with what I was doing. My quads on the other hand, took off immediately and I felt everything extremely well right out of the gate. Continue to work on this. On the compound movements, like my powerlifting friends will tell you, it is again a never-ending quest to achieve form perfection for your particular structure.

Key: One of the most important things for you to start to figure out now as you go through this program (after having gone through the novice ones as well), is what exercises do you really feel work awesome for you. I am giving you many different exercises to try, and you will start to realize the ones that you feel best performing. Take note of these. These should become very foundational for you.

Now if you don't feel an exercise perfectly, it doesn't mean it is not good for you! It could mean that you need to get better at it. If you continue to beat your head against the wall though, and don't feel like it is working correctly, then it might be an exercise you steer away from. For example, I do not like barbell rows. I do feel them on the Smith machine though. So, when I do a bent over row, it will likely be in the Smith machine.

3) Progressive Overload

This is a key concept that will drive most of your training goals. What this means is that you gradually increase the stress you place on the body in order to elicit a stress response, such as making muscle fibers larger. Generally, this means that you do a little more weight or do a few more reps with a given weight than the last time for beginners. As an intermediate we will additionally now start to use more intensity. As a novice, I never let you go to complete failure. Now we will start to work in some failure training. This is the single biggest difference as you move up in experience. The reason why we do this is that we have now exhausted your "newbie gains", and you simply need to work harder to elicit positive changes now. This is how it works. The closer you get to your genetic potential, the harder and smarter you must train. Working harder is now our motto. When you reach the advanced stage, it becomes more of a train harder but smarter game.

Simply put, you still make the body do more than it did last time.

Summary of key takeaways so far

1. Use great form when lifting weights
2. Try to focus on muscles contracting hard during isolation exercises and moving the bar with good form on compound movements – continue to improve on this
3. Plan to add in more weight lifted, and/or more repetitions each week, and start to include failure sets to up the intensity – use progressive overload!

2 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HYPERTROPHY

I do want to spend a little time on some basic principles of muscle physiology, don't worry, it won't be too confusing. If you know me, you know my #1 rule is keeping messages simple and understandable, not trying to impress you with big words. I do want to cover some ground here though, because it will help you understand why we train the way we do.

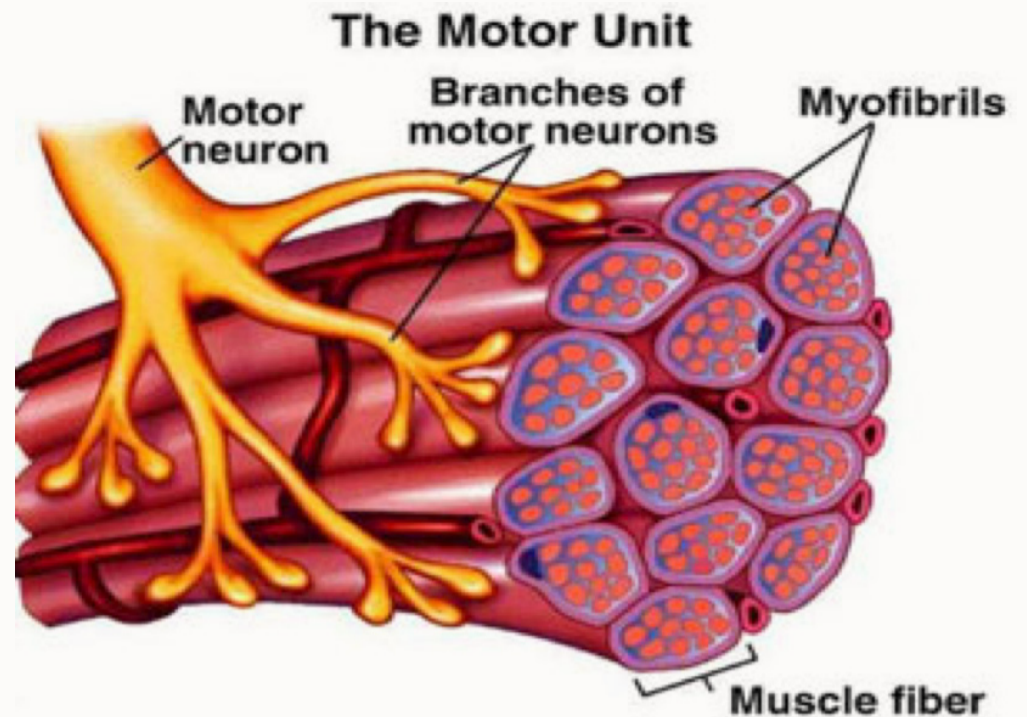
1) The Size Principle

You should be familiar with Henneman's Size Principle, otherwise known as the principle of orderly recruitment. The picture below is a motor unit. It is basically neurons controlled by your brain talking to muscle fibers and telling them to contract. Some motor units only control a small number (probably dozens) of fibers. This means they produce less force, as there are simply less muscle fibers working. On the other hand, we have some motor units that control a high number (probably thousands) of fibers. They can obviously then produce much more force. Producing more force means you can move heavier weight. The smaller motor units are often called low threshold motor units, and the bigger ones are called high threshold motor units.

Now, when we lift light weight, it generally means we mainly tap into the low threshold motor units, since the weight is so light there is no need to call the other thousands of muscle fibers into play (the high threshold motor units) to produce force. This is really what the "The Size Principle" is. It is the observation that motor units are recruited in a sequence. The higher the demand, the more the larger motor units are called into play. Basically, you only use what you need.

NOTE: The exception to this would be taking light sets to failure. What happens in this situation is muscle fibers fatigue so additional fibers get called into play to help.

We might do this occasionally, but training to failure with very high repetitions is tough to do over and over. We also still need a significant load to create the appropriate mechanical tension which we will get into shortly.



Here is what this means to you, and what I want you to remember. If you train really light, you don't create a demand for the larger motor units, meaning you essentially miss training a lot of muscle fiber.

For a beginner or intermediate, this is a pretty easy principle to deal with. You just train at a given level of intensity. I am going to cover that soon where I discuss how hard you should be training, so hang tight.

2) The Force Velocity Relationship – Mechanical Loading

More big words, but don't worry. It's an easy concept. So, you have this fiber thing going (see picture below). Looks crazy right! All it means is that you have these two types of thin filaments (smaller components of muscle), actin and myosin, that attach together to produce a lot of force. That's it. What kind of lifting causes this action to take place? Generally speaking, it's lifting enough weight that the bar doesn't move super-fast. It moves kind of slow so you are straining a bit, but not real slow. Those myofilaments won't stay attached if the weight is just flying up and down real fast. So, we need weight that will create some strain and effort.

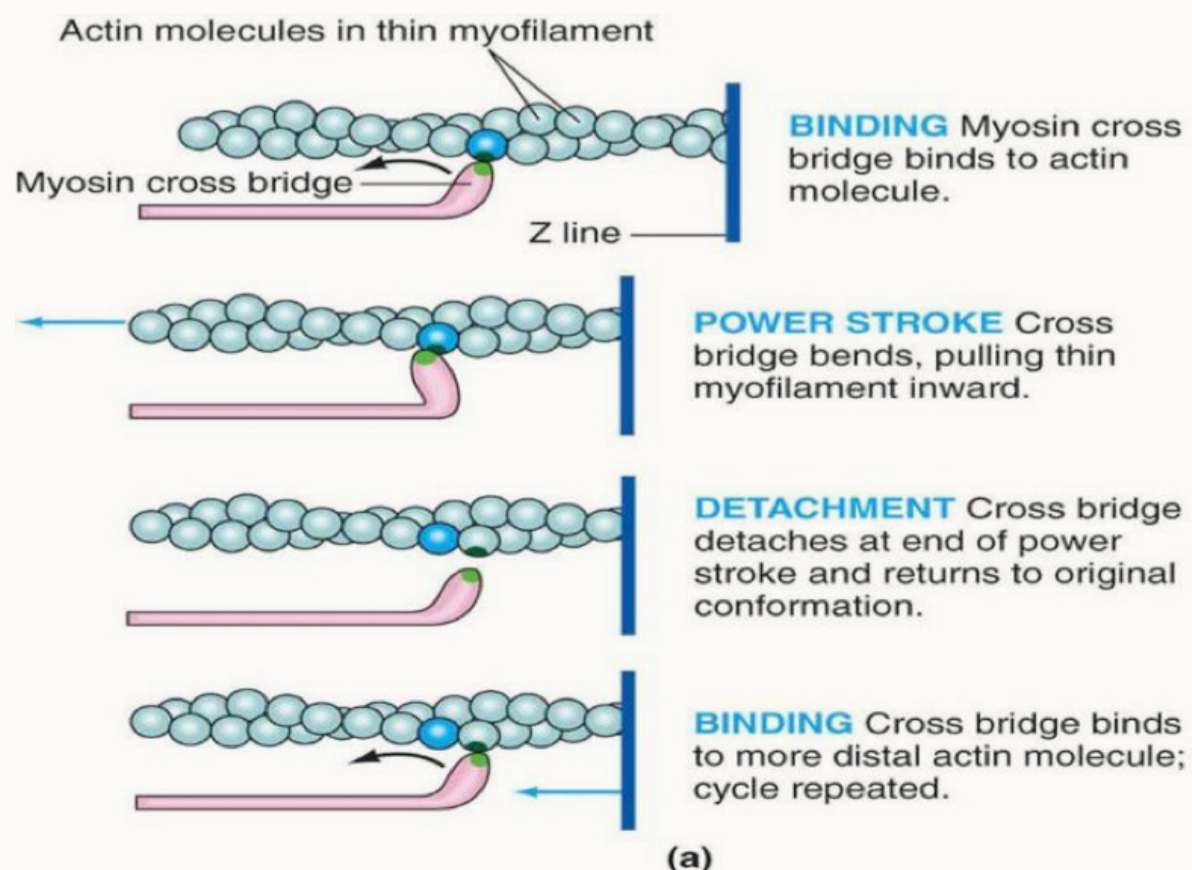
Why is it important that the actin and myosin filaments stay attached? When this process is occurring, your absolute best friend is taking place. Who is your best friend? MECHANICAL LOADING. This means your muscle fibers are being loaded and pushed.

Mechanical loading is essentially why muscle actually grows. It means each fiber contracts at a slower speed (due to load of the weight) producing high levels of force.

Generally, what we find is that using a weight that is 85% to 90% of your 1 rep max, results in a high level of motor units making fibers fire, and you cover the mechanical loading needed. However, you don't have to use weight that heavy. You could use 60% for example, and just do more reps. If you choose to use weights heavier than 85% of your 1 rep max often, you are at high risk of form breakdown, or injury.

My specific recommendation is to use over 60% of your 1 rep max, and up to around 80-85% for you. The reps ranges and intensity required will be laid out for you in your program. You won't even have to think about this. Our program design takes care of it automatically.

NOTE: To expound on what I mentioned earlier about training with lighter weights, scientific evidence shows that you can actually train with around 40-50% of your 1 rep max and still make gains. That requires you to go to failure, and we will begin to do a little bit of this. I still think overall a little higher % is better for you! It's also extremely difficult to do set after set of high reps to failure. It's brutal and hard to sustain.



NOTE: TIME UNDER TENSION was not mentioned, why is that? Well it is a legitimate principle; it means keeping the muscle under tension by continuously doing reps. Many people say that time under tension is the key to growth. This can be misleading though. If you pick up a superlight weight and sit there and curl it for say 60 seconds, how much of that is relevant tension? If growth was simply a factor of time under tension, then riding a bike for long periods would give everyone massive quads. I think it is smarter to think about relevant time under tension, in other words the time you have to work hard! Here is the good part, you won't even have to think about it during this program. By using a certain amount of weight and intensity, and the proper number of reps, this takes care of itself as well.

Ok so where are we at now with our summary of key takeaways?

Summary of key takeaways so far

1. Use great form when lifting weights
2. Try to focus on muscles contracting hard during isolation exercises and moving the bar with good form on compound movements
3. Plan to add in more weight lifted or repetitions each week – use progressive overload!
4. Use 60-85% of your 1 rep max when training, no ultra-light weights (except for warmups)!

HOW HARD SHOULD YOU TRAIN?

There is a lot of discussion these days questioning the proper amount of intensity for a set or given workout in general. If you have seen my videos you know that I often go hard, like crazy hard, but it is because I have trained many years. I would not advocate that an intermediate go nuts like I often do, but training at the level of intensity you did as a beginner will not get the job done now. Now we have to start pushing a little harder and digging a little deeper. I do believe in general there is still an irrational fear of training too hard.

There are charts that talk about this specifically which I include in all my programs. I use a concept called "Rate of perceived exertion - RPE". A set with an RPE of 9 would mean leaving 1 rep in the tank based on the chart below. Higher intensity means leaving less reps in the tank. As a beginner you always left some reps in the tank, and never went to failure. Now that you have moved to the intermediate stage, we can start to take some sets to failure and even on occasion do a set past failure. This intensity change is the biggest difference between a novice and intermediate training program.

Here is an example of an RPE chart below. As an intermediate I want you at an RPE of 8-9 on your top set for your compound exercises, and 8 all the way up to 10 on your top set for isolation exercises for some of your work sets. Isolation exercises tend to allow for less form breakdown and are thus safer and easier to push a little harder. If you go to failure on the compound movements, you are at risk of losing your perfect form as well, we don't want that!

This will be spelled out in your program. Once you reach the advanced stage, you'll get to experiment with the 10 and above RPE sets, they are fun!

Rate of Perceived Exertion Flow Chart	
Fairly easy like a warm-up weight	@ 6.0
▶ You can do 4-6 more reps	@ 7.0
▶ You can do 2-3 more reps	@ 8.0
▶ You have 2 more reps left in the tank	@ 8.5
▶ You have 1 more rep left in the tank	@ 9.0
▶ Went to failure at perfect form	@ 10
▶ Went to failure with loose form after perfect reps completed	@ 11
▶ Used a high intensity technique to push beyond failure	@ 12
▶ Used multiple high intensity techniques/go apeshit set!	@ 13

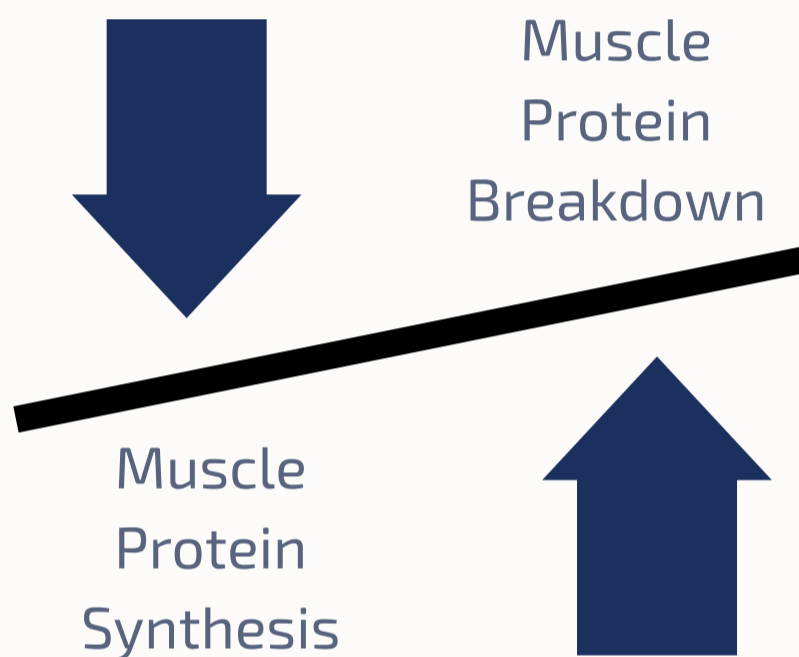
Click on any one of the tags for an example

NET PROTEIN BALANCE

Let's talk about another core concept that I think is important for a beginner to understand. The concept is net protein balance.

There are two factors that make up your net protein balance. Muscle Protein Synthesis and Muscle Protein Breakdown. We will call them MPS and MPB.

Think of them on a scale like this incredibly complex graphic below.



MPS is a process that involves building muscle up. Your body adds protein to build muscle. Think of it like bricks. Protein are the bricks making up muscle and you can add bricks to build the muscle. We stimulate this process a couple of different ways. For our purposes we will focus on two.

1. Weight training with moderate to heavy weights. Doing 60% and above of your 1 rep max especially stimulates MPS. So, if you can bench 200 lbs., doing hard reps with 120 lbs. and above will help. Using say 50 lbs. (25% of your 1 rep max) will likely not do anything significant.
2. Consuming a diet with adequate calories and protein especially also drives this process. Don't skimp on the protein and calories! More on that later!

MPB is the process by which proteins are broken down. For our purposes this is caused by 2 main things.

1. Training hard drives MPB. This is not necessarily a bad thing! When we break down proteins they can be disposed of and new and better proteins or bricks can be laid down. Still, you do not want an extreme amount of MPB.
2. Your diet can manage MPB. Eating enough carbohydrates especially can help in addition to the protein content helping to drive MPS. The simple message is eating enough protein and carbs will address this!

The goal would be to tilt the scales toward a net balance that is higher in MPS and MPB.

The simple takeaways are this:

1. Use enough weight (above 60% of your 1 rep max) when training.
2. Consume a balanced macronutrient diet (protein, carbs, and fat) to ensure we end up in a positive net protein balance tilted toward more MPS.

So, let's stop and recap again. Now where we are at?

1. Use great form when lifting weights
2. Try to focus on muscles contracting hard during isolation exercises and moving the bar with good form on compound movements
3. Plan to add in more weight lifted or repetitions each week – use progressive overload!
4. Use 60-85% of your 1 rep max when training, no ultra-light weights!
5. **Consume a balanced macronutrient (protein, carbs, and fat) diet to ensure we end up in a positive net protein balance.**

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU TRAIN?

This is another great topic for us to discuss. I mentioned weight training driving a process called Muscle Protein Synthesis (MPS) earlier. This is a good thing, and means we are potentially adding bricks to our layers of muscle. How long does this process take though? Most of the scientific evidence would point to around 48 hours. Some research would say less, but this is generally where it falls out. It also is nearly back to baseline at 36 hours.

This would lead us to believe that training a muscle every 2-3 days would be optimal. If you wait, you could lose out on gains! So, for example let's say you do chest on international chest day (Monday), but then don't do it again until the following Monday. Your protein synthesis in your trained muscle, chest, will have returned to baseline and then probably dropped back to normal after not training it again for so long. This is why it is good to train a muscle 2-3 times a week. Most of the research, and what I have seen in practice for over 30 years, give together on this. Training more times than this doesn't seem to equate to any better progress. As a novice, we touched each body part 2-3 times a week, mostly 3 times. Now you are training harder though, so we need more time to recover. We now will back it down a tad to training each body part 2 times a week. This is plenty of frequency given our intensity levels.

Now here are the nuances that you need to be aware of. Let's talk about soreness. If you are feeling sore, muscle fibers have not fully recovered. Generally speaking, I think it is a bad idea to train when really sore. This can lead to a syndrome called overtraining. We need to manage this, or you are not going to be able to train your muscles 2 times a week. So, what causes soreness exactly? Well there are many factors, but the ones we are focused on are the amount of sets you do, known as volume, and also the intensity you train at. If you do a high number of sets for a bodypart, you will likely get real sore. If you train to failure, and push yourself really hard, you will likely get real sore.

What are we going to do in practicality as an intermediate? We are going to limit your sets and intensity still, but they are going to be raised. We are loosening the reins up a bit from when you were a novice. To do this, you have to be RECOVERED!

Ok time for a regroup. Where are we overall?

1. Use great form when lifting weights
2. Try to focus on muscles contracting hard during isolation exercises and moving the bar with good form on compound movements
3. Plan to add in more weight lifted or repetitions each week – use progressive overload!
4. Use 60-85% of your 1 rep max when training, no ultra-light weights!
5. Consume a balanced macronutrient (protein, carbs, and fat) diet to ensure we end up in a positive net protein balance.
6. Use a moderate number of sets and moderate to high intensity to ensure we maximize recovery and muscle protein synthesis. This allows us to train muscles 2 times a week.

PROGRAM DURATION AND SPLIT

Hopefully now you have a great idea of how we are going to build your program based on those 6 guidelines!

This is an 8-week program.

How does it look exactly? You will have 8 different workouts spread out like this. This is weeks 1-4. You will have 2 4-week blocks to complete.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Upper body Workout 1	Lower body Workout 2	OFF	Upper body Workout 3	Lower body Workout 4	OFF	OFF

This is weeks 5-8.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Upper body Workout 5	Lower body Workout 6	OFF	Upper body Workout 7	Lower body Workout 8	OFF	OFF

PROGRAM IDEOLOGY

In the novice stage, we hit everything 3 times a week. Now we need to step it up though and add some intensity. This means we limit our training to doing each bodypart to 2 times a week. I believe that if we continue to try to hit everything 3 times a week, with the added intensity, we are setting ourselves up to fail. We won't be able to recover, or maybe even get through all the workouts. We are smarter than that though! Harder training means the need for harder recovering!

At this stage it is still important though that we focus on learning to execute certain exercises perfectly. This means not changing out exercises to frequently, so we give you 4 weeks on each workout to nail it before changing over to new workouts.

You have 8 workouts to do. Workouts 1-4 will be done in a 4-week block, and then workouts 5-8 will be done in a 4-week block as well.

We need to continue to focus on progressive overload. Now is not the time to get fancy and lose track of your progress!

APPLYING PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

I mentioned above the importance of progressing through adding weight to the bar or reps to the sets. So how do we do this effectively? Think about the intensity I described above. Your RPE will be anywhere from 8 to 10 now! This means you will have reps left in the tank on most sets, but we will be going to failure now on some movements. As a beginner you were able to add weight or reps every time. Now I want you to continue to strive for this, but I also want you to know that you may not be able to do this every single time. As a newbie you had the benefit of fresh muscles adapting, and a nervous system that was getting better and better at coordinating movement. We do not have as much of that now, so more intensity is in itself a progression. Put simply, if you go to failure, when you weren't before, you are doing more! So, strive to improve, but the added intensity guarantees you that you are working hard!

Overload by:

1. Adding 5 to 10 lbs. on the compound lifts each week. For barbells you will likely be closer to 10 lbs. For dumbbells it will likely be 5 lb. jumps.
2. Add 1 rep on each isolation movement each time you do it from the last.
3. Add intensity in workouts by working some sets at a higher RPE.

For example – Let's say you do incline barbell presses with 185 for 8 reps during week 1 on Monday. The following Monday I would shoot for 190-195 for 8.

Later that workout you do triceps pushdowns with 85 lbs for 12 reps. The following Monday when you do them do 13 reps.

Let's say you can't get your rep increase, but you still go to failure. Bingo, you did the best you could and that is perfect.

NOTE: Often you will be doing 3-4 sets of an exercise. What I really want is for that 1st set to be the one where you are able to do more weight or reps. Again, fatigue may cause you to lose some reps as you get to the later sets, and that is OK!

DELOADS

You may need to do a deload after your 8 weeks. Deloads are simply a period where you don't go as hard. This can mean taking a week off from the gym for some. For others it can mean dialing down the intensity during your work sets or even decreasing the amount of sets you do (reduce volume). I like to decrease the number of sets done by 20% overall. This means if your workout is 20 sets total, then you go down to 16. I also like to ensure no sets are taken to failure. In your case we aren't doing that anyway, so a volume reduction will likely do the trick for 1-2 weeks.

If you were training with one of my advanced programs you would probably need to deload more than you will with this one, but I suspect that many will still need to back off some.

Deloading benefits:

1. Reduces chance of injuries by allowing soft tissues to get a break.
2. Resets your responsiveness to training. This means your hard work will create more changes once again. Maybe not newbie gains, but it's exactly like the old saying, 1 step back, 2 forward.
3. Creates hunger, not physical hunger, mental hunger. You start to get antsy to train hard again after pulling back so much. This will give you a mental edge when resuming your normal program.

HOW MANY SETS SHOULD YOU DO?

Volume is the amount of sets you do for a muscle group. It can be tricky because many people count everything they do as a set including warmups, while people like me only count the harder sets. This can skew the numbers. The scientific literature seems to point to anywhere from 10-20 sets per muscle group per week. I think 10 is a bit low, even for a beginner, but 20 is really pushing it. The sweet spot is probably somewhere in the middle for novices and more toward the 20 number for intermediates and advanced trainees, which is what I target. In some cases, coaches increase volume as a means of overload. I don't have an issue with this for more advanced trainees, but I think the focus for novices should be to keep the number of sets the same but improve on execution and progressive overload. The focus for intermediates should be adding intensity!

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE CHANGE EXERCISES?

This is one of the biggest differences in novice vs advanced trainee programming. Advanced athletes tend to adapt to exercises quite quickly, and you really must find new ways to challenge your body into further growth. Intermediates are somewhere in the middle. You aren't in the stage where you can do the same workout for months and benefit but switching too soon is likely not optimal either.

REST BREAKS

Rest breaks should be as follows unless I state something different in the plan

Compound movements – 3 minutes

For example – Squats, deadlifts, bench press, rows.

Isolation movements – 1 minute

For example – Curls, pushdowns, side laterals, calve raises

WARMING UP

Here are 2 options on warming up. One is if you are short on time, the other is my general warm up technique. It starts at about 5 minutes in. That is what I prefer you do.

▶ [How To Warm Up Intelligently \(THE RIGHT WAY\)](#)

*****FEEDER SETS** – This will make sense if you watched the warm up video. I will mention feeder sets often in the program. They are extremely important. These are low rep sets designed to just get you to your working sets carefully, so you do not get injured, but to not exhaust your muscles. Not doing these sets is why many people have been injured executing low volume/high intensity workout plans. These are not official sets as the intensity is extremely low on these.

Basically, we do 1-2 really light higher rep sets to get the blood moving in the target muscle and to get the joints warmed up. We then bring down the reps as we work up to your work sets to not exhaust you.

Here is an example of what it might look like.

Dumbbell Press – Assumption you can do 60lbs dumbbells for 8 reps.

Warm up – 20 lb. dumbbells x 20 reps

Warm up – 30 lb. dumbbells x 15 reps

Warm up (feeder set) – 45 lb. dumbbells x 4 reps

Work sets – 60 lb. dumbbells for 3 sets of 8 reps

5 KEYS TO MAXIMIZING RECOVERY

You should only train a muscle once it is recovered. Beating up a muscle and then training it again before it's ready is a recipe for suboptimal results, best case, or overtraining worst case. This should be a major focus for you.

1) Intra-workout Nutrition

Training muscle groups 2-3 times a week means we have to get our muscles recovered fast so they are ready for the next session. I highly recommend using an amino, electrolyte, and carb drink intra (during your workout) for maximum recovery. This will allow you to drive more aminos and carbs into the muscle, heightening the recovery process. It also increases blood flow and supports your immune system.

Most males would do well with 6 grams of essential aminos, and 20-30 grams of carbs. Titrate the carbs up or down depending on your size. The goal is to greatly reduce soreness so we can feel fresh for each session. When you do this, all of the right things are happening internally.

NOTE: Essential aminos contain not only the BCAA's you need, but the other aminos your body can't make on its own as well. Having all essential aminos present is what helps build new muscle tissue.

Most females would do well with 6 grams of aminos and 20 of carbs. Again, titrate up or down depending on size and amount of muscle.

My product choices are:

- [Recovery from Granite Supplements](#)
- [Intra Carb from Granite Supplements](#) (only if you need to add extra carbs)

NOTE: Full disclosure, I own this company – Granite Supplements

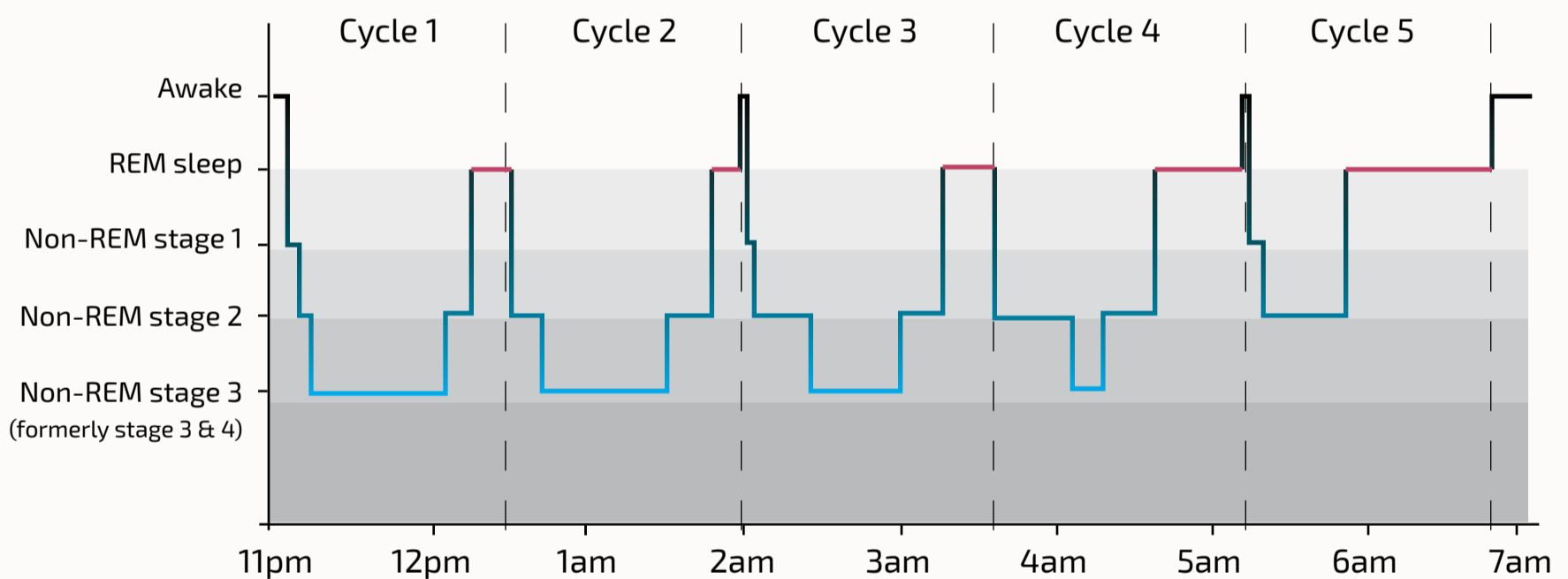
2) Sleep

Make it your mission in life to reduce stress outside of the gym, and to get a full night's sleep every single night. This will greatly enhance recovery as well!

Generally, you want to get 5 full sleep cycles. Every cycle is about 90 minutes. As you can see from the chart below, earlier sleep cycles are heavier in non-REM sleep, later sleep cycles are heavier in REM sleep (indicated in red).

This is important because of these benefits:

- Non-REM is physically restorative. You release Growth Hormone, clear waste products, and resupply energy stores just to name a few things
- REM is mentally restorative. Your memory is especially impacted positively



Some tips for better sleep include:

- Turn off all electronics 2 hours before bed, or at a minimum turn off the blue light on your mobile devices 1-2 hours prior
- Make your bedroom as dark as possible
- Make the temperature in your room around 65 (keep it cool)
- Read a book or do something that relaxes you before retiring
- Do not take later afternoon naps, 20-30 minute naps around lunch are ok

3) Cardio

You do not want to be limited in pushing your muscles by poor cardiovascular fitness. Being in poor cardiorespiratory shape could result in limiting the amount of effort you put into your sets. If you do a set of curls and you are winded, you probably need to have a better fitness base. Cardio is a good thing to establish this fitness base. Basically, just don't be so out of shape you can't train with any intensity. Cardio also helps with your general sense of well-being and with blood flow to your muscles. There is a good chance it can help you live a little longer too, which is a good thing!

Cardio can be a double-edged sword, however. Too much will limit your recovery, and it can potentially overtrain you. I would advise you do some very simple cardio ONLY IF you find yourself having a hard time getting through the workouts due to cardiovascular fatigue. Simply do some speed walking 2-3 times during the week for 35-40 minutes. I would prefer you not do it on your 4 training days. I like to keep track of my resting heart rate, and when it is in the low 70s to 60s, I know I am good. Once you get there you can back off completely or bring it down to 1-2 times a week for maintenance.

4) Calorie Balance

It is very important to note that if you are in caloric deficit, you are probably going to slow down muscle growth, and depending on how much the deficit is, impact recovery in a negative way. So be CAREFUL! Lower calorie diets make recovery extremely difficult. Just remember this when building your nutrition plan.

5) Life Stress

Life can be tough right? Right now, as I type this our country is under quarantine and we are being told to stay home. Jobs are being lost daily; stress is at an all time high for many. Every time I click on Facebook, it is essentially people fighting. Whether it's job

stress, marital stress, or other stresses, just know that these things can impact recovery in a big way through the constant release of the stress hormone cortisol. The only thing you need to know, is to simply try to manage these things as best you can. Every situation is unique, and there is no silver bullet to solve every issue. One thing I will say is this. If you are struggling, go help somebody else. I think you'll be surprised at how you feel when you help someone else and improve their day, even if in a small way. I would also avoid things you know stress you out, such as being on Facebook for me! Think about what you love to do also. For me it's spending time with my kids. We might go outside and play a game of basketball. Whatever it is you enjoy that makes you feel great (provided it is legal), focus on that for a spell! The last thing I would mention is moving forward when you think you have failed or made a mistake. If you mess up a meal, or miss a session, don't ruminate. Just get over it and get back on track. There is no benefit to beating yourself up over it. Move forward always.

HOW SHOULD I EAT?

I am going to provide some basics here to get you started. These are very general numbers. There are many formulas out there, such as the Harris Benedict equation to help you determine baseline calorie needs, and apps like MyFitnessPal to help you track. I find that people get so caught up in being exactly right with their starting diet, that they do not actually start! I believe the best way to start a meal plan is just get in the ballpark and go. What is going to be most important, is the adjustments you make along the way anyway. So, don't get lost in the minutia, just get to work. Here is a get started formula for you that will not be perfect but will get you going.

GAIN MUSCLE GOAL:

FOR MEN

- Multiply your bodyweight x 16 for your total calories.
- For example, Victor weighs 200 lbs., so this is 3,200 calories daily.
- Multiply your bodyweight x 1 for daily grams of protein.
- The 200 lbs. person thus needs 200 grams of protein daily.
- Multiply your bodyweight x .5 for daily grams of fat.
- The 200 lbs. person thus needs 100 grams of fat daily.
- The rest of your calories should be consumed as carbs.
- In this example, the 200 grams equal 800 calories (a gram of protein = 4 calories.)
- The 100 grams of fat equal 900 calories (a gram of fat = 9 calories.)
- 3,200 total calories minus the 1,700 calories from protein and fat leaves Victor with 1,500 calories.
- $1,500 \text{ calories} / 4 = 375 \text{ grams of carbs.}$ * a gram of carbs equals 4 calories.

FOR WOMEN

- Multiply your bodyweight x 14 for your total calories.
- For example, Susan weighs 125 lbs., so this is 1,750 calories daily.
- Multiply your bodyweight x 1 for daily grams of protein.
- The 125 lbs. person thus needs 125 grams of protein daily.
- Multiply your bodyweight x .5 for daily grams of fat.
- The 125 lbs. person thus needs 62.5 grams of fat daily.
- The rest of your calories should be consumed as carbs.
- In this example, the 125 grams equal 500 calories (a gram of protein = 4 calories.)
- The 62.5 grams of fat equal 562.5 calories (a gram of fat = 9 calories.)
- 1,750 total calories minus the 1,062.5 calories from protein and fat leaves Susan with 687 calories.
- $687 \text{ calories} / 4 = 172 \text{ grams of carbs.}$ * a gram of carbs equals 4 calories.

Our Hero	Bodyweight	Total Calories	Protein	Fat	Carbs
Victor	200	3,200	200	100	375
Susan	125	1,750	125	63	172

NOTE: Women often do a little better with slightly lower carbs and slightly higher fat than men. You can thus adjust the numbers above for females if you like.

LEANER GOAL:

As I said above, it is very important to note that if you are in caloric deficit, you are probably going to slow down muscle growth, and depending on how much the deficit is, impact recovery in a negative way. So be CAREFUL!

If you are looking for a starting point for getting leaner, start with all the above to gain weight!

This may be higher than your normal intake but it's important to build your metabolism so that you have "somewhere to go" with your calories as you hit plateaus. I would advise this for 2 weeks

before starting the cutting process. Many times, people are not eating much, so the 1st week is really tough. Once you make it through week 1, week 2 isn't so bad in terms of getting food down. Then you start the cutting!

I like making adjustments that reflect 10% changes in caloric intake or calories expended (or a combination of the two). So, in the above example Victor's adjustments could be something like this:

- Victor's total calories are 3,250. A 10% change would be an impact of 325 calories.
- 10% net total difference in calories in vs. calories out
- 5% from a reduction in calories via diet changes (162 calories reduced)
- 5% from an increase in caloric expenditure from adding cardio (162 calories expended via cardio)

Continue to make changes more or less aggressively based on results. You may not want to adjust at all, or do another 5%, etc.

If you want a more customized 1-time plan or weekly coaching to get you started, you should have been prompted with an option upon making your purchase of the training program. If you missed it, you can always find all of our [coaching packages here](#).

ABOUT JOHN



John is an IFBB Professional bodybuilder, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, and Certified Sports Nutritionist. The CSCS and CISSN are the most respected certifications in the industry.

John has presented multiple times at the most prestigious health and fitness seminar in the world known as the SWIS Symposium. He has also lectured across the world in Canada, Australia, Scotland, England, Ireland, and US.

John has competed over 60 times as an amateur bodybuilder and over 10 times as a professional in addition to coaching thousands of people over the course of his 3 decades in the industry.

Though not currently competing John continues to connect with and educate through his rapidly growing YouTube channel with a current subscriber base of over 350,000 people.

John continues to be recognized by his peers as one of if not the most influential professional bodybuilders in the industry.

John owns and operates a website called Mountain Dog Diet and also owns a supplement company called Granite Supplements that has been recognized for its elite level formulas.

John is also a self-proclaimed Pancake-ologist and gourmet donut connoisseur.

Most importantly John is a husband and father of twin boys. His wife Mary often makes guest appearances in his videos and his boys Alexander the Yoyo king and Rubik's cube solver, and Jonathan the gymnastic Spiderman of the family, do as well.

WEEKS

1 TO 4

MAKE SURE YOU BRING A NOTEBOOK TO RECORD THE WEIGHTS YOU ARE USING, AND REP COUNTS FOR EACH EXERCISE. WE WANT TO BEAT OUR NUMBERS EVERY SINGLE WORKOUT.

MONDAY – WORKOUT 1

UPPER BODY – CHEST EMPHASIS

1/ Incline bench press

This exercise will be our primary focus and mass builder for the next 4 weeks. Learn to grab the bar, control the negative and then explode up with as much force as you can generate. If you fast forward to 3:15 on the video you will see the form we are after here. We want to stop 2-3 inches short of our chest, then blast up to 3/4's lockout. Our goal is to do a few warm up sets of 10, then 2 feeder sets of 4 (these are just so you can find your proper load, not exhaust you) then we will do 3 working sets of 8 before we move on.

3 total work sets

RPE - 10 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: This exercise packs on the mass to your upper chest and front delts. The stronger you get at this the more powerful your physique will look. Also, this shortened range of motion will keep your shoulders healthy.

[Basic Heavy Chest Workout For Mass | John Meadows & Seth Shaw](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - Empty bar x 10 reps

Warm up - 95 lbs. x 10 reps

Feeder set - 135 lbs. x 4 reps

Feeder set - 185 lbs. x 4 reps

Work sets - 225 lbs. for 3 sets of 8 (now you may lose a few reps on the 3rd set and that's ok)

2/ Slight decline dumbbell press

Just like with incline barbell, we want to progress with load while keeping form intact. Notice this is a slight decline, not drastic. If you do not have one of these benches, simply put a 25 pound plate under the front of the bench to give us the small angle. With these come down to just outside your chest, then blast up and flex your pecs hard. We are going to take the reps a tad higher here with 10 reps per work set. All we should need by this point is 2 feeder sets to get to your working weight. On your first work set give 10 reps where you literally fail at 10, meaning you could not complete one more rep with perfect form. Rest 3 minutes and this is where things get fun. Whatever you just did for 10, use that load, go to failure again, then instead of resting reduce the load by 30% and go to failure once more. See the chart of how I want this to look. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 8 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: I hate extreme decline movements for chest as they tend to stress the shoulders. But this slight decline targets the pecs better than any exercise on the menu

[Exercise Index - Slight Decline Dumbbell Press](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 70 lb. dumbbells for 4 reps

Work set 1 - 100 lb. dumbbells for 10 reps

Work set 2 - 100 lb. dumbbells x 10 reps, drop to 70 lb. dumbbells for 8 (reduction of 30%)

3/ Pec Dec Flyes

Now that your chest is fully pumped with blood from all the pressing, let's stretch it out really well. Fast forward to 14:16 in the video to see this form. Sit tall in the seat with your chest high.....we NEVER want your chest sunk in on this exercise. Focus on getting a really good stretch on your pecs with every rep. Do not rush these and feel every inch of the movement. After 1 feeder set, I want 3 working sets of 10. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1.5 minutes

Note: If you don't have a machine flye that you feel is really hitting your chest, feel free to do flat dumbbell flyes here as a solid alternative.

[▶ 21 Reasons Why Your Chest Isn't Growing \(FIX IT FAST\)](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 100 lbs. x 4 reps
Work sets - 130 lbs. x 10 reps

4/ Dumbbell rows

Ok on to some rowing. You should have a good sweat going so the amount of warm-ups and feeder sets you need will be slightly reduced. For form here, get a utility bench and brace your non-working arm on it. Take a split and staggered stance (your working side leg, should be kicked back so that you can pull the dumbbell to your hip). From here, without twisting or flexing your erectors, drive your elbow up and back. When lowering the weight get a good stretch here too. This technique will pack mass on your lats and not add any tissue to your midsection. I want 2 warm-up sets of 10 so that you get into the groove of back training, then 2 feeder sets to get to your working weight. See the chart for how I would structure the jumps in weight. Once you are to your work sets, give me 4 sets of 8 on each arm.

4 total work sets

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minute

Note: Lats can be a tricky body part to isolate, but doing this one arm at a time will help you focus in on the contraction and stretch. Also bracing yourself on the bench keeps your erectors out of the movement.

[▶ No Low Back Pain Dumbbell Row - Exercise Index](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - 30 lbs. x 10 reps
Warm up - 50 lbs. x 10 reps
Feeder set - 60 lbs. x 4 reps
Feeder set - 70 lbs. x 4 reps
Work sets - 80 lbs. for 4 sets of 8

5/ Assisted pull ups

Most gyms have this machine that you either stand on, or kneel on. If not, you can use a band for assistance. The reason I like the assisted version so much, is it allows for perfect body position (sternum lifted, no swinging front to back and it allows you to just drive with the elbows). I want to use a slightly wider than shoulder width, pronated grip and aim to get 4 sets of 10 reps. Remember the coaching cues and drive blood into those lats. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minute

Note: Now some of you may be great at pull ups and are welcome to do them with your body-weight or with added weight. If you cannot complete 4 sets of 10 with perfect form, simply use the assisted machine as recommended for the day.

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - 130 lbs. x 15 reps
Work sets - 100 lbs. for 4 sets of 10

6/ Dumbbell shoulder press

Lets kick the reps back down to 8 and see if you can nail this mass builder today. Either use a short back bench or a high incline bench like I am using in the video. Bring the dumbbells down to where they are in line with your ears and then drive up to $\frac{3}{4}$ lockout. Do not do these sloppy as you don't want to rip your shoulder out of socket. After a warm up and a feeder set give me 3 sets of 8 reps here. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minute

 [Quick Shoulder Workout \(MOST WILL FAIL!!!!\)](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 30 lb. dumbbells for 15 reps
Feeder set - 50 lb. dumbbells for 4 reps
Work sets - 60 lb. dumbbells for 3 sets of 8

7/ Dumbbell side laterals

Fast forward to 14:08 to see the form I'm looking for on side laterals. Just need 1 warm up and 3 work sets for these. We want the dumbbells to go OUT and not up. This will keep your upper traps out of this exercise. Slight bend in the elbow, then ensure that your elbow is above your wrist. I want 3 working sets of 10 here. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minutes

Note: Be sure not to shrug the weight up, if you feel your traps burning, simply sit the weight down, grab lighter dumbbells and restart the set.

 [Killer Chest & Shoulder Workout | Destination Dallas Texas](#) 

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - 10 lbs. x 20 reps
Work sets - 20 lbs. x 3 sets of 10

8/ Dumbbell hammer curl

There are multiple ways to do dumbbell hammer curls, but they all have the same goal.....training your bicep, forearm and brachialis. Do these 1-arm at a time and be sure you are squeezing your bicep hard at the top, then coming down to full extension. After your warm up set of 10, I want 2 sets of 10 with your working weight to failure. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: This often forgotten movement has been a staple in MountainDog programming for years. This will give your biceps thickness from the front and the side. Also, with, only 1-minute rest breaks, you may lose some reps on the last set.

[▶ Get 21 inch Arms with this killer bicep tricep workout](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set – 15 lbs. dumbbells for 10 reps
Work sets – 25 lbs. dumbbells for 2 sets of 10

9/ Ez bar preacher curl

On to my favorite bicep exercise, the preacher curl. Take a narrow grip on the bar, pin your triceps and arm pits on the pad and curl. Now one thing I want to mention here is we cannot push the stretch of this exercise, way too risky for a bicep tear. Control the negative, stop $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down, then right up into a full peak contraction. Give me 2 working sets to failure around 10 reps, after a feeder set to find the right weight. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: You will have to play around with the seat height on this exercise. The goal is to have your arms pits directly on top of the pad so that your lower arm is in a fixed position at all times. This 100% isolates the biceps and gets the shoulders out of the movement.

[▶ Preacher Curls](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set – 40 lbs. for 4 reps
Work sets – 60 lbs. for 2 sets of 10

10/ Dual handle tricep pushdowns

On to some triceps!! Do you have a great pump yet.....I bet your shirt is way tighter than when you started. Go to the cable station and get 2 individual handles and attach them to the high cable. From here, pin your elbows to your rib cage and drive the handles straight down. If you notice I like to come up high to really stretch out your triceps on every rep. 1 warm up set then right into 2 sets where we reach failure at 10 reps. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Glue your elbows to your ribs to ensure your triceps are taking the brunt of the load. If you let the elbows rock front to back, your shoulders are moving the weight.

[▶ Tricep pushdowns with single handles](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set – 70 lbs. for 10 reps
Work sets – 100 lbs. for 2 sets of 10

TUESDAY – WORKOUT 2

LOWER BODY – QUAD EMPHASIS

1/ Lying leg curl

This is my go to exercise for starting leg day and something I know will pack on mass to your hamstrings. Pin your hips into the pad, brace your abs and then focus on lifting the weight with only your hamstrings. Its very easy to get your low back involved with this exercise and all that does is remove tension from the target muscle. At the 1:15 point in the video, listen carefully to the coaching cues. I want 3 hard sets of 8 once you get to your working weight. See the chart for how I want warm-ups and feeder sets. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest – 1 minute

Note: Nothing gives you thick hanging hamstrings (your biceps femoris) like lying leg curls. Make these burn like crazy and you will watch all your pants get tighter.

▶ [Monster Glute and Hamstring Leg Workout](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up – 50 lbs. x 20 reps
Warm up – 90 lbs. x 15 reps
Feeder set – 120 lbs. x 4 reps
Work sets – 150 lbs. for 3 sets of 8

2/ Squats

Alright, this is your bread and butter for the next 4 weeks. I can promise you that no exercise packed on the mass that squats have for me over the years. You are welcome to use a multitude of bars based on what you have access to. Right now the Spider Bar from EliteFTS is my go to, but I understand most gyms don't have this. Take a slightly wider than shoulder width stance with your toes pointed out. From there, keep your chest up and sink down to right at or above parallel. Do not sacrifice form for weight here, this exercise carries a high risk of injury if performed improperly. I want you working up doing sets of 6 until you know if you put one more 5 pound plate on, you wouldn't get all 6. We will call the last 3 working sets. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: Be sure to stay upright and almost sit down on your heels. I see far too many lifters pushing their hips back and leaning forward, which puts tons of stress on the low back and off the quads.

▶ [Hardest Leg Workout In The World | Most Will Fail](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up – 95 lbs. x 20 reps
Warm up – 135 lbs. x 15 reps
Feeder set – 185 lbs. x 4 reps
Working set – 225 lbs. x 6 reps
Working set – 250 lbs. x 6 reps
Work set – 275 lbs. x 6 reps (could not have gotten one more rep with perfect form, so stopped here)

3/ V-stance leg press

With your feet low on the platform and toes pointed out, sink these deep to really work the quad sweep (outer portion of the leg). Your ankle flexibility will dictate how low you can put your feet, just make sure your heels stay in contact with the plate at all times. Let's nail a few low rep feeder sets to work up to a cluster set. If you don't know what I'm referring to, you are in for a treat. Once you are at your working weight (something you can get for around 10 reps) we will do 3 mini sets. See chart for exactly how I want this worked. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 3 minute

Note: This cluster set will take heart, but will also be preparing you for the advanced level MD programs. Be sure your knees are tracking in line with your feet and traveling outside of your rib cage. This style is how we really target your vastus lateralis.

[▶ Leg press technique for quad sweep](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - 2 plates per side x 20 reps
Feeder set - 3 plates per side x 4 reps
Feeder set - 4 plates per side x 4 reps
Feeder set - 5 plates per side x 4 reps
Working set - 6 plates per side x 9 reps (have 1-2 reps in the tank)
Rest 20 seconds
Work set - 6 plates per side x 5 reps (have 1 rep in the tank)
Rest 20 seconds
Work set - 6 plates per side x 4 reps (failure, cannot do 1 more rep)

4/ Leg extensions

The pump you will get on these extensions will be like no other. Pin your hips down and back in the seat, grab the handles and let's get after that pump. After 1 feeder set, give me 3 hard sets of 12. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: If you really want to target the top of your quad (rec fem) pull your toes back towards your shin. If you want more teardrop (VMO) point your toes down.

[▶ Exercise Index - Leg Extension](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 100 lbs. x 6 reps
Work sets - 125 lbs. x 3 sets of 12

5/ Standing calf raises

Now that your upper legs are fried, let's move onto some calf training. What I want you guys to emphasize here is the stretch position. So many bounce out of the bottom and I want the exact opposite. Come down controlled, slight pause in the hole, then drive up onto your toes. Give me 10 perfect form reps just like that after a feeder set.. Check the video out here, where John talks about multiple ways to tax your calves with this exercise. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 85 lbs. for 15 reps
Warm up set - 105 lbs. for 15 reps
Feeder set - 135 lbs. for 4 reps
Work sets - 165 lbs. for 3 sets of 10

Note: You will hear “calves are all genetics,” yes that may be true for the freaks (think Flex Lewis). But we all can make them better. Yes it will burn, yes calves are painful but they will improve with hard work.

▶ [Proper Foot Placement To Build Freaky Calves](#)

6/ Sit ups

The final piece of the puzzle today is abdominal work. Give me 4 sets of 12 and be sure you watch the video for the form I am after. I do not want you just flopping around like a fish or tugging on your neck to get these reps done. Really put your mind to work here and think “shorten the distance between my pelvis and sternum”, then control the negative to make those babies work. If you do this right, I bet your abs will be shaking or cramp the first few sessions of doing this. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: For so many abs are an afterthought. They are key for tying your upper and lower body together for exercises like squats and deadlifts, but also if you have any desire of competing one day, abs must be developed like any other body part.

▶ [Exercise Index - How To Do a Proper Sit Up](#)

WEDNESDAY - OFF

THURSDAY – WORKOUT 3

UPPER BODY – BACK EMPHASIS

1/ Meadows row

A staple in all of my back training for over a decade has been this exercise. This hits your upper back harder than any exercise I have found. Get a solid base, keep your back flat and drive your elbow up. Be sure you watch this video and tinker around with your form. Once you find the groove here I promise you will love this exercise. Hit a couple warm up sets then a feeder set before getting to your working weight. Once there, bang out 3 sets of 8. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: Be sure you are using lifting straps here as I do not want your grip to be a limiting factor on this exercise.

[▶ Exercise Index - Meadows Row](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up – Empty bar x 20 reps

Warm up – 1 25 lb. plate x 15 reps

Feeder set – 2 25 lb. plates x 4 reps

Work sets – 3 25 lb. plates for 3 sets of 8

2/ Seated cable row

You will be feeling the effects of that Meadows row, so let's lock into a cable and drill your lats. Use a neutral grip (palms facing, narrow grip). Sit tall on the bench and do not get a lot of backwards lean as you drive the handle to your belly button. Another taste of failure here like we did on Monday with decline dumbbell press. After 1 feeder set I want you to hit failure at 10 reps, rest 3 minutes before we do a drop set. See the chart for what I want this to look like. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: You will see a ton of guys moving a ton of load here, but its all low back. Lock your torso in place and drive your elbows back for maximal lat contraction.

[▶ YOU ARE Doing the Low Row ~~WRONG~~ \(DO IT LIKE THIS\)](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set – 130 lb. x 4 reps

Work set 1 – 200 lb. x 10

Work set 2 – 200 lb. x10, drop by 30%, 140 lb. x 10

3/ Dumbbell pullover

Now that your back is crazy pumped, lets stretch the lats out. Lay long ways on the bench, with your head hanging off the backside. While maintaining a large arch in your back, lower the dumbbell behind your head. This will really stretch you, so be careful with your shoulder joint. Then when coming back up, stop the weight right at your forehead. After a feeder set, give me 3 sets of 10 reps here. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: it is very easy to get your triceps involved on this movement if you aren't careful. Get a slight bend in your elbows and keep it there, we want ZERO elbow extension here.

 [Dumbbell pullovers](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 40 x 4 reps
Work sets - 50 for 3 sets of 10

4/ Slight incline dumbbell press

We worked hard on the decline dumbbell press on Monday, now on to some slight incline. Look at the video to see the angle of the bench I am after. Come all the way down outside your chest, then press up to $\frac{3}{4}$ lockout on all reps. I want 4 sets of 8, after 2 warm up sets and 1 feeder set. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

 [Incline Dumbbell Press Drop Set](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 30 lbs. dumbbells for 15 reps
Warm up set - 50 lbs. dumbbells for 12 reps
Feeder set - 70 lbs. dumbbells for 4 reps
Work sets - 90 lbs. for 4 sets of 8

5/ Dumbbell hex press

A wonderful exercise if you struggle to feel your chest working. Get on a flat utility bench, ram 2 dumbbells together and let's start pressing. The great thing about this exercise is not only are you getting tension up and down, but also across your pecs by driving the dumbbells together as hard as you can. This creates so much tension in the pecs and enhances the pump like crazy. Give me 4 sets of 8 here. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: A great exercise for your chest, but also some additional tricep work. If you really focus on the pecs your chest will be fried after 3 sets here.

 [Exercise Index - Hex Press](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 30 lb. dumbbells for 4 reps
Work sets - 45 lb. dumbbells for 4 sets of 8

6/ Dumbbell y-raises

Laying on a high incline bench we are going to bring the dumbbells to a 10 and 2 o'clock position to maximally tax your side delt. Now you won't be able to use a ton of weight here, but if you watch John in the video starting at 4:16 you will see the exactly how hard these will be for you. Do 3 sets of 12 here, after 1 feeder set. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

With only 1-minute rest breaks here, you may lose some reps on the last set or so. That is ok.

[▶ The Perfect 3 Exercise Shoulder Workout for Capped Delts](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 10 lb. dumbbells for 6 reps

Work sets - 15 lb. dumbbells for 3 sets of 12

7/ Bent over dumbbell rear delt raise

Give me 1 light feeder set of 10, then go right into your working sets of 15 reps for all sets. When doing this exercise, think about driving the weight OUT and not up. In addition, if you attempt to get too much range of motion (coming back and up to high) this will really engage mid and lower traps. We are after thick rear delts here, so our goal is maximum tension on just that muscle. Keep a slight bend in your elbow and if you start to lose range of motion, simply finish the set with bottom half partials. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

You will read how if you want your shoulders to grow, you MUST press, but we have found through 1000s of clients, that if you master the flye movements your shoulders grow like weeds.

[▶ Exercise Index - Bent Over Dumbbell Rear Delt Raise](#)

8/ Palms up dumbbell curl

This staple of mine is an old school favorite. I want to do dumbbell curls keeping your palms up the entire time, so there will be NO twisting. In the video you can see what I want at 1:35. After a feeder set, give me 2 working sets to failure around 12 reps. Your biceps will be fried if you do these right. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: By keeping your palms up, it really stretches out the biceps, which makes this pump even better.

[▶ Arm explosion!!!!](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 15 lb. dumbbells x 6 reps

Work sets - 25 lb. dumbbells for 2 sets x 12 reps to failure

9/ Dual rope pushdowns

This will smash your triceps and bring so much blood to the back of your arm. Kick your hips back, pin your elbows to your rib cage and push the handles down and back, then FLEX. Do not short-change the stretch here either. Give me 2 sets to failure around 12 reps, after 1 feeder set. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: If your gym doesn't have 2 ropes or if you train when the gym is really busy, simply use 1 rope to do this exercise. It's still very effective.

[▶ Exercise Index - Dual Rope Tricep Extensions](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 50 lbs. x 6 reps

Work sets - 70 lbs. for 2 sets x 12 reps to failure

10/ Ez bar skull crushers

Now that your triceps and elbows are warm, lets hit this basic mass builder. Grab an Ez bar, lay back on a bench and lower the bar right behind your head. You should feel and amazing stretch in the long head of your tricep. Come up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way, then right back down. 1 feeder set then right into 2 sets to failure around 12 reps. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: This exercise can be hard for guys who have elbow pain. If you fall into that category, try switching to dumbbells or kettlebells as this doesn't lock you into a fixed hand position..

[▶ Decline lying triceps extensions](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 40 lbs. x 6 reps

Work sets - 60 lbs. for 2 sets x 12 reps to failure

FRIDAY – WORKOUT 4

LOWER BODY – HAM/GLUTE EMPHASIS

1/ Seated leg curls

If you have ever read any of my previous training you know I love leg curls with drop sets. Take a look at the video on the range of motion I am after. Ignore the partials for now..... they will come in future programs. With this exercise it's all about set up. You want your knee in line with the hinge joint of the leg curl, push your hips down into the seat and then lock your quads in with the lap support. From there give me 2 warm up sets, 2 feeder sets, then your work sets. Your work sets will look like this, 2 sets of 8. Then on the 3rd, do 8, reduce the load by 30% and give me another 8. This will burn like crazy but fight through it. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Nothing gives you thick hanging hamstrings (your biceps femoris) like leg curls. Make these burn like crazy and you will watch all your pants get tighter.

 [3 Tips to Build Massive Hamstrings](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up – 50 lbs. x 20 reps
Warm up – 70 lbs. x 15 reps
Feeder set – 90 lbs. x 4 reps
Feeder set – 120 lbs. x 4 reps
Work sets – 150 lbs. for 2 sets of 8
Work set – 150 lbs. x 8, drop to 105 lbs. x 8 more reps

2/ High and wide leg press

After the leg curls and squats you should be sweating like crazy and have a great pump. So just a couple low rep feeder sets here to find your target load. I want your feet high and wide on the platform to really target those hamstrings. We are also taking your reps a little higher. I want 3 sets of 12 once you get to your top end sets. Do not let your knees come in on this exercise at all and sink them as low as you can, while keeping your low back pressed into the pad. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: Too many lifters lack the flexibility in their ankles and hips to bottom the machine out. So what happens is they allow their lower backs to round and come off the pad, this places tons of pressure where we do not want. Plus the chances of injury are very high. Moral of the story, go as low as your body allows. Do not force the range of motion here.

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set – 2 plates per side x 6 reps
Feeder set – 4 plates per side. x 6 reps
Working sets – 5 plates per side for 3 sets of 12

3/ Walking lunges

So if you watch the video, at the 4:18 mark we are doing walking lunges. Now you can use dumbbells here, a barbell, chains, or kettlebells.....completely up to you. This is an excellent exercise because it forces each one of your legs to work independently as well as working on your balance. I want 10 steps down, 10 steps back. No need for feeder sets, just grab a moderate weight and go. When you come down, you will stop just shy of your knee tapping the ground. This will also work your cardiovascular system very well!! **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: If you want to target the glutes more, take long strides and pitch your body forward. If you want the quads to work, take short strides and stay upright.

▶ [3 Types of Lunges That Will Blow Your Legs Up](#)

4/ Barbell stiff leg deadlift

Time for some deadlifts!! Flat back at all times, slight bend in the knee and push your hips back as the bar tracks down your legs. Give me 3 sets of 8 here with your working weight after 1 feeder set. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: If you are extremely flexible through your hamstrings, stand on a plate and use 25 pound plates (instead of 45s) to increase your range of motion.

▶ [Grow your Glutes and Hamstrings with this unreal leg Workout](#)

5/ Seated calf raises

Fast forward to 2:29 in the video so you can see the form I want on the seated calf raise. Just like the standing version, NO bouncing out of the bottom, and then drive all the way up onto your toes. This exercise locks your legs in, so you get zero assistance from your quads and hamstrings. Give me 3 sets of 10 after a couple feeder sets and a warm up. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Seated calf raises are excellent for building the soleus muscle which is under the diamond shaped gastrocnemius. To have a fully developed lower leg, we need to train both.

▶ [Freaky 12 Set 3 Exercise Calf Workout](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 135 lbs. x 4 reps

Work sets - 185 lbs. x 3 sets of 8

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 45 lbs. for 15 reps

Feeder set - 90 lbs. for 4 reps

Feeder set - 135 lbs. for 4 reps

Work sets - 185 lbs. for 3 sets of 10

6/ Decline leg raises

The learning curve for this exercise is much steeper than the sit up, but you should have a good foundation of ab strength at this point. Get on a decline bench, take a rope that you would use for a tricep extension and hook it around the foot piece of the decline bench. From there we are going to curl our body up, fully contracting your abs. Watch this video and you will see the exact form I am after. Lets do 4 sets of 10 here today as I bet this will make you sore. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: With lower abs, people tend to be much weaker on this exercise, so lets really work on doing this slow and controlled. If you can only do 5 reps the first time doing these, that's ok. Our goal will be to build your total number of reps with perfect control.

 [Exercise Index - Decline Leg Raises](#)

SATURDAY, SUNDAY - OFF

WEEKS

5 TO 8

MAKE SURE YOU BRING A NOTEBOOK TO RECORD THE WEIGHTS YOU ARE USING, AND REP COUNTS FOR EACH EXERCISE. WE WANT TO BEAT OUR NUMBERS EVERY SINGLE WORKOUT.

MONDAY – WORKOUT 1

UPPER BODY – CHEST EMPHASIS

1/ Flat barbell press

So our mass builder for these next 4 weeks will be the flat bench press. A total gym bro favorite but if done correctly can pack on muscle. Be sure to really warm up because I do not want you tearing or straining a pec with these. Pay close attention to the form John is using in the video at the 3:41 mark. Control the negative, touch your chest, then explode the bar up as fast as you can. Work up doing sets of 6 here until you either miss a rep or form begins to break. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: We want to ensure you have 4 points of contact at all times on this exercise. Your head, shoulder blades, and glutes should never leave the bench and then your feet should stay planted on the floor. You will find you have so much more power if you use this coaching cue.

[▶ 4 exercise chest workout for mass](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - Empty bar x 10 reps
Warm up - 95 lbs. x 10 reps
Warm up - 115 lbs. x 10 reps
Feeder set - 135 lbs. x 4 reps
Feeder set - 155 lbs. x 4 reps
Work set - 185 lbs. x 6 reps
Work set - 205 lbs. x 6 reps
Work set - 225 lbs. x 5 reps (if I would have tried another rep I would have missed it)

2/ Neutral grip incline dumbbell press

Coming off the flat bench press, I want to not only target your upper pecs, but also chose a shoulder joint friendly exercise. If you notice in the video, John is using a 45 degree angle bench and isn't fully neutral with his hands. You are going to love this exercise. All we should need by this point is 2 feeder sets to get to your working weight. On your first work set give me 10 reps where you literally fail at 10, meaning you could not complete one more rep with perfect form. Your second set we are going for broke here. Whatever you just did for 10, use that load, go to failure again, then instead of dropping the weight, give me bottom half partials until you cannot move the dumbbells 1 inch. See the chart of how I want this to look. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: When selecting your weights, you will most likely use less than you do for traditional incline dumbbell press.....but you may shock me and yourself.

[▶ Exercise Index - Neutral Grip Incline Dumbbell Press](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 35 lb. dumbbells for 4 reps
Feeder set - 50 lb. dumbbells for 4 reps
Work set 1 - 70 lb. dumbbells for 10 reps
Work set 2 - 70 lb. dumbbells x 10 + 5 bottom half partials

3/ Dips superset with stretch push-ups

You should be pumped, but let's take it to the next level. We are going to achieve this with a superset (2 exercises done back to back without rest). For both of these exercises do NOT come all the way up, we are after the stretch here for both. My goal for you is to get at least 8 reps on each, but if you can do more, CRANK!! **2 rounds for 4 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: If you aren't strong enough to get at least 8 good form dips, feel free to use the assistance machine.

[▶ Dip and Stretch Pushup Superset](#)

4/ Narrow grip lat pulldown

Use the attachment that we used for seated cable row. What I'm after here is a good stretch but an even better contraction. Sit up tall, and drive your elbows straight down. Give me 4 sets of 10 once you are at your working weight. **4 total work sets**

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - 70 lbs. x 10 reps
Warm up - 100 lbs. x 10 reps
Feeder set - 120 lbs. x 4 reps
Feeder set - 150 lbs. x 4 reps
Work sets - 165 lbs. for 4 sets of 10

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: Do not turn this into a low back exercise....meaning when you pull down you start really leaning back to get the bar to your chest. This takes the tension off the lats and places it all on your spinal erectors. You may have to lighten the load and that is ok. Stay tall and drive with the elbows.

5/ Rack pulls

Form, form, form. Watch this video a few times because I cannot stress the importance of keeping your back flat, abs tight and locking everything in stone. You will be able to move a very heavy load here but ensure that you never round your back at any time. If this happens, simply set the bar down, pull off some weight and restart the set. I want you to do sets of 3 up until you find your working weight here, so all feeders. Even on the light sets ensure your form is spotless. This will add mass to your posterior chain like no other exercise, so let's work it. Once you find the proper weight, give me 4 sets of 6. **4 total work sets**

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 135 lbs. x 3 reps
Feeder set - 185 lbs. x 3 reps
Feeder set - 225 lbs. x 3 reps
Feeder set - 250 lbs. x 3 reps
Work sets - 275 lbs. for 4 sets of 6

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: Be sure you are starting every single rep with a dead stop on the pins. I do not want you bouncing as this can lead to injury and lack of muscle recruitment.

[▶ How To Deadlift like a Bodybuilder | Back Workout](#)

6/ Incline dumbbell front raise

Lay back on a 45 degree utility bench, keep your palms down (pronated grip) and only come up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way. This will hammer your front delts.....so chose your weight wisely here. Give me 3 sets of 10 after a feeder set. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Doing these on the incline bench really stretches out your delts as opposed to the standing version.

[▶ Exercise Index - Incline Front Delt Raise](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 10 lb. dumbbells for 6 reps
Work sets - 15 lb. dumbbells for 3 sets of 10

7/ 6-ways

You may start your set off thinking that this is a whimpy exercise.....then by about 8 reps you will be cursing me. No need for any warm-ups at this point, sit down on a shoulder press bench and go out to your side, then in front of your face, then all the way up. From there we reverse the process: lower down to in front of your face, out to the side, then lower the dumbbells by your side, that is 1 rep. Give me 3 sets of 10 just like the video shows. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: These will NOT take a lot of weight and for a frame of reference I use 10 pound dumbbells for sets of 10.

[▶ Exercise Index - 6 Ways for Shoulders](#)

8/ Drag curl

You are going to love this contraction. Keep the bar pinned to your body and just scrap it up your shirt. As the bar comes up, your elbows will travel backwards. Once you are in the fully shortened position, really squeeze your biceps. After your feeder set of 10, I want 2 sets of 10 with your working weight to failure. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: This old school curl movement will pack on the bicep mass if performed correctly. Be sure to keep your shoulders down, so that you don't let your traps do any of the work

[▶ Exercise Index - Drag Curls](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 30 lbs. x 4 reps
Work sets - 50 lbs. for 2 sets of 10

9/ Dumbbell concentration preacher curl

Remember the hex press exercise I taught you for chest?? This is the same premise. Smash the dumbbells together creating tension both north and south but also east and west. Control the negative, stop $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down, then right up into a full peak contraction. Give me 2 working sets to failure around 10 reps, after a feeder set to find the right weight. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: You may have noticed that most of the arm exercises are moderate load but bring you a crazy pump and fast. This is the key for arms and what separates them from your other body parts. Typically heavy load for arms will only give you elbow pain, not the growth we are after.

[▶ Exercise Index - Concentration Preacher Curls](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 15 lbs. dumbbells for 4 reps
Work sets - 20 lbs. dumbbells for 2 sets of 10

10/ Bent over tricep extension

New exercise here and one I know you will love. This one is all about the stretch of the long head. Let the handles come all the way back behind your head, then drive out to $\frac{3}{4}$ lock-out. We need a couple warm up sets, 1 feeder then right into 2 sets where we reach failure at 10 reps. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: I'm using the individual handles here as it allows for wrist mobility. You are welcome to use the standard rope as you will see most people do.

[▶ Bent over extensions with single handles](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 50 lbs. for 15 reps
Warm up set - 60 lbs. for 12 reps
Feeder set - 80 lbs. for 4 reps
Work sets - 100 lbs. for 2 sets of 10

TUESDAY – WORKOUT 2

LOWER BODY – QUAD EMPHASIS

1/ Seated leg curls

If you noticed we will start all of our lower body days with some sort of leg curl. The seated leg curl, as you discovered on the 2nd leg day in weeks 1-4, will lock you in tight and allow for flawless execution. Glue your hips to the pad, get a full range of motion and let's kick off this leg day. Give me 2 higher rep warm up sets, followed by 2 feeder sets, then 3 work sets of 12 reps. The last set should be brutal if you did this right. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Notice in the video, at 0:45, when Paul goes he is pitching his torso forward. This places a "pre-stretch" on your hams to increase the difficulty of this exercise. Feel free to tinker around with this technique if you struggle to engage your hamstrings.

▶ [Put "SIZE" on Your Hamstrings & Glutes | Amazing Workout](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up – 50 lbs. x 20 reps
Warm up – 90 lbs. x 15 reps
Feeder set – 100 lbs. x 4 reps
Feeder set – 120 lbs. x 4 reps
Work sets – 150 lbs. for 3 sets of 12

2/ Shoulder width leg press

Leg press is often thought of as the step-child to the squat for total leg growth. Yes I love squats, but the leg press is a great mass builder as well. And if you have a beat up low back a great alternative strength exercise. If you skip forward to 2:07 in the video, look at how Andrew is doing the leg press. Shoulder width stance, mid-way up on the platform. With this exercise remember, go as low as your flexibility allows and only come up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to ensure all the tension is on the quads. Give me sets of 8 until you reach a top end load. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: All leg press machines are not created equal. If your gym has multiple to pick from, try a few different ones to see which one you feel the best in your quads.

▶ [Ultimate Leg Workout for Thickness & Mass](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set – 1 plate per side x 15 reps
Warm up set – 2 plates per side x 12 reps
Warm up set – 3 plates per side x 8 reps
Warm up set – 5 plates per side x 8 reps
Working set – 7 plates per side x 8 reps
Working set – 8 plates per side x 8 reps
Working set – 9 plates per side x 8 reps
(could not get 1 more rep with good depth and form)

3/ Dumbbell squats

Stack up some plates, straddle the dumbbell and turn your toes out to target the inner thigh. Another great exercise if you have a beat up low back while still ingraining your technique on perfect squat posture. Keep your chest up and back flat at all times on every rep. Give me 2 sets of 8 here once you reach a good working weight. Then the hardest part of the workout for today.....drop set time. See the chart for what this should look like. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: Adductors (inner thigh) really add dimension to your legs from the front. So sink these bad boys low and feel the adductor working hard here.

[▶ Exercise Index - Dumbbell Squats](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - 20 lbs. x 10 reps
Feeder set - 40 lbs. x 4 reps
Feeder set - 60 lbs. x 4 reps
Working set - 75 lbs. for 2 sets of 8 reps
Working set - 75 lbs. x 8, then drop to 50 lbs. x 8, then drop to 25 lbs. x 8

4/ Leg extensions

After that drop set you may need to sit down here to compose yourself. Once your breathing returns to normal, I want 1 feeder set of 6 reps, then 2 working sets of 10 reps where you hold the contraction for 3 seconds on every single rep. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Don't short change yourself with fast counting once the pain sets in. Embrace it, this is where the growth occurs.

[▶ Exercise Index - Leg Extension](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 100 lbs. x 6 reps
Work sets - 125 lbs. x 2 sets of 10 with a 3 second hold

5/ Standing calf raises

Your upper legs may feel like jello here and that's to be expected, but this is not the time to let off the gas. Be sure to **emphasize** the stretch position. So many bounce out of the bottom and I want the exact opposite. Come down controlled, slight pause in the hole, then drive up onto your toes. Give me 10 perfect form reps just like that after a couple warm ups and a feeder set. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Wait until you get to the advanced level calf programs.....you will look back at this program and be glad you invested the time in building a base level of strength here.

[▶ Proper Foot Placement To Build Freaky Calves](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 100 lbs. for 15 reps
Warm up set - 150 lbs. for 15 reps
Feeder set - 180 lbs. for 4 reps
Work sets - 195 lbs. for 4 sets of 10

6/ Hanging leg raises

Nothing fancy here, find a pull up bar, hold on tight and knock down some leg raises. This is an excellent lower ab exercise and one that may take you some practice. If you are swinging a ton back and forth, brace your abs hard, as this will help stabilize you. With time you will get so much better at these, so it's a challenge. Give me 4 sets of 12-15 reps. When watching the video, we are only doing the first exercise, not both. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Believe it or not, doing hanging leg raises after a tough leg day will actually help get the blood moving in your body, speed recovery and loosen up a tight back if you have one.

 [Ab Combination #1 from Mountain Dog Training](#)

WEDNESDAY - OFF

THURSDAY – WORKOUT 3

UPPER BODY – BACK EMPHASIS

1/ 1-arm barbell rows

I hope you really enjoyed the Meadows row, so now we move onto another MD special, the one arm barbell row. Take a staggered stance, grab the bar right up by the collar and drive your elbow up and back. Notice the posture of every rep, how John's back is always flat, never rounded and his hips are stable. Be sure you watch this video and tinker around with your form. Once you find the groove here I promise you will love this exercise. Hit a couple warm up sets then a feeder set before getting to your working weight. Once there, bang out 3 sets of 8. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: Be sure your non-working arm is braced on your leg. This sets you up to pull the most weight, to take balance out of the equation, and to lock your torso in place.

[▶ Exercise Index - One Arm Barbell Row](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up - Empty bar x 20 reps

Warm up – 1 25 lb. plates x 15 reps

Feeder set – 2 25 lb. plates x 4 reps

Work sets – 3 25 lb. plates for 3 sets of 8

2/ Incline dumbbell row

Those 1 arm rows drilled your lats, now let's hit your upper back with some pronated (overhand grip) dumbbell row. With every rep, try to open up your back at the bottom to take benefit of the stretch position. Then drive up, keeping your elbows high. After 1 feeder set I want you to hit failure at 10 reps, rest 3 minutes before we do a drop set. See the chart for what I want this to look like. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: If you have access to kettlebells we prefer you use those to get the benefits of the increased range of motion, if not, dumbbells will still work well.

[▶ Exercise Index | Incline Dumbbell Rows](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set – 30 lb. x 6 reps

Work set 1 – 60 lb. x 10

Work set 2 – 60 lb. x10, drop to 40 lb. x 10, then drop to 20 lb. x 10

3/ Single arm pulldown

After 2 rowing movements, its time for some pulldowns. If you can't tell by now we love the individual handles for exercises. This supinated pulldown will destroy your low lats when you nail this form. Slightly tilt your torso back and drive your elbow down. Finish these off with a huge contraction and a bit of lateral spine flexion to take this exercise to the next level. After a feeder set, give me 3 sets of 10 reps here.

3 total work sets

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: If your lat pulldown doesn't have 2 independent pulleys, just do these one arm at a time.

[▶ Exercise Index - Single Arm Pulldown](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 80 x 6 reps

Work sets - 100 for 3 sets of 10

4/ Machine chest press

Be sure to watch this longer attached video to see exactly what type of machine press I want you to choose. The take away should be: find the right range of motion, ensure you feel your pecs stretching and contracting, then finally a machine that doesn't cause any pain in your shoulders. I want 4 sets of 10, after 2 warm up sets and 1 feeder set. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: This can be an incline, flat or even decline pressing machine. All that matters here to me is that you maximally feel your chest working.

[▶ Exercise Index - Chest Machines](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 30 lbs. dumbbells for 15 reps

Warm up set - 50 lbs. dumbbells for 12 reps

Feeder set - 70 lbs. dumbbells for 4 reps

Work sets - 90 lbs. for 4 sets of 10 reps

5/ Incline dumbbell flyes

Your chest should be pumped after that machine press, so let's really stretch it out with these flyes. Notice the pronated (overhand) grip, the arch in my back and how deep I sink these reps. You will dig this exercise and most likely be cramping if you do this right. Give me 4 sets of 10 here. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: I really like the pronated grip here, but if you find it bothers your shoulders at all, switch to a semi-pronated or even fully neutral grip with the dumbbells.

[▶ Incline dumbbell flyes](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 20 lb. dumbbells for 6 reps

Work sets - 30 lb. dumbbells for 4 sets of 10

6/ Reverse pec dec

You will see tons of posts or articles on how this exercise is not effective.....well I have literally 100s of client that will say differently. If you really work this exercise, your rear delts will respond and grow at an alarming rate. Give me 3 working sets of 15. Bring on the pump. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: So many people try to get too far back in the range of motion here, which just forces your traps to work. Bring your hands right in line with your shoulders, contract, then start your negative.

▶ [Super Pump Shoulder Workout | Victoria "Fit Girl Gone Green"](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 50 lbs. for 8 reps
Work sets - 70 lbs. for 3 sets of 15

7/ Dumbbell hang and swing

So watch the video closely here. Lay face down on an incline bench, keep your arms straight, and simply swing the dumbbells out to your side. This completely fries your side and rear delt when done right. I want high reps here again for 4 sets of 30. This will sting a bit. **4 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: This technique allows for you to just hammer the delt and it eliminates all momentum from body English and the traps.

▶ [Hang and Swing Destroyer Set](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 25 lbs. for 15 reps
Feeder set - 35 lbs. for 5 reps
Work sets - 45 lbs. for 4 sets of 30

8/ Ez bar reverse curl

Grab an Ez curl bar with an overhand grip, stand tall and curl towards your face here. This will rock your biceps and forearms like no other exercise. In the video you can see what I want at 1:39. After a feeder set, give me 2 working sets to failure around 10 reps. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: You will see lots of people doing tons of wrist curls, but if you want impressive forearms, the reverse curl and hammer curls are the way to go.

▶ [December 2016 Workout of the month - Arms](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 30 lb. bar x 8 reps
Work sets - 50 lb. bar for 2 sets x 10 reps to failure

9/ Reverse grip pushdowns

Back to the single handles here for an underhand tricep pressdown. Let these come up high to get a great stretch, then drive them straight down and squeeze your triceps HARD. Give me 2 sets to failure around 10 reps, after 1 feeder set. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Your wrists and triceps will love this movement. Complete freedom of the wrists will also help prevent long term injuries.

[▶ Reverse grip pushdowns for triceps using single handles](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 50 lbs. x 4 reps

Work sets - 70 lbs. for 2 sets x 10 reps to failure

10/ Lying tricep extentions

Now that your triceps and elbows are warm, I want to work this skull crusher variation. Lay down on the floor with the dumbbells starting by your head (not over your chest), lower them down all the way to the floor, rest them for a split second, then fire it up. You should feel an amazing stretch in the long head of your tricep. Come up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way, then right back down. 1 feeder set then right into 2 sets to failure around 10 reps. **2 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Most people would take that second pause at the bottom to rest.....not us, be sure to keep tension on the triceps to make this burn even greater.

[▶ Exercise Index - Lying Tricep Extensions](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 20 lb. dumbbells x 4 reps

Work sets - 30 lb. dumbbells for 2 sets x 10 reps to failure

FRIDAY – WORKOUT 4

LOWER BODY – HAM/GLUTE EMPHASIS

1/ Rest-pause lying leg curls

I want you to take my favorite hamstring builder and let's make it harder. These rest-pause leg curls will force you to be explosive and maximally fire the bicep femoris. Pin your hips into the pad, brace your abs and then focus on lifting the weight with only your hamstrings. Its very easy to get your low back involved with this exercise and all that does is remove tension from the target muscle. I want 3 hard sets of 10 once you get to your working weight. See the chart for how I want warm-ups and feeder sets. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest – 1 minute

Note: Just like with the dumbbell tricep extensions, do not let tension off the hams when in the bottom position.

▶ [Leg curls with rest-pause technique](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up – 50 lbs. x 20 reps
Warm up – 70 lbs. x 15 reps
Feeder set – 90 lbs. x 4 reps
Feeder set – 120 lbs. x 4 reps
Work sets – 150 lbs. for 3 sets of 10

2/ Reverse lunges

Another new exercise for you. So you can do these in a smith machine or in a power rack. The thing is I want you to have something to hold on to so that balance does not affect the exercise. In addition, stand on a plate or riser so that you can get an increased range of motion. Give me 2 sets of 8 reps on each leg, with your third work set being a drop. See the chart for how I want this to look. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 10 | Rest – 3 minutes

Note: Just like with walking lunges, if you want to target the glute, lean into the bar, if you want more quad, stay upright and really drive through your heel.

▶ [Exercise Index - Reverse Lunges](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set – 20 lb. dumbbell x 4 reps on each leg
Work sets – 40 lb. dumbbell for 2 sets of 8 reps per leg
Working set – 40 lb. dumbbell x 8 reps, drop to 20 lb. dumbbell x 8 reps (switch legs and repeat)

3/ Barbell hip thrust

Set up and execution here are huge. Watch the video and pay close attention to everything Paul is teaching. Place a barbell across your hips and your back in the middle of a utility bench, we want to stack the ankle under the knee. From here, we will brace the abs and come up to full hip extension. This next part is key, we do NOT want extreme range of motion, we just want to work the top half of this lift to isolate the glutes. After a couple feeder sets to get into this exercise give me 3 working sets of 10. Your glutes will be so pumped.

3 total work sets

RPE - 9 | Rest - 3 minutes

Note: A strong/powerful butt will help increase your squat and your low back health. Do not neglect this body part as it's a key contributor to physique.

[▶ Exercise Index - Hip Thrust "Target the Glutes"](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 135 lbs. x 4 reps

Feeder set - 185 lbs. x 4 reps

Work sets - 225 lbs. for 3 sets of 10

4/ Cable pull through

Let's finish off your hamstrings and glutes with this great exercise. Get into a cable station with the pulley set all the way to the bottom position. Straddle the rope attachment (what most lifters use for tricep pressdowns), keep your back perfectly flat, and push your hips back towards the weight stack. This will lengthen your hamstrings. Once in a full stretched position, use your hams and glutes to move the weight until you are upright. Then at the top really squeeze your glutes hard. That's 1 rep and I need 3 sets of 8 here. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Just like with stiff leg deadlifts, we want a slight bend in your knee, but set that in stone. As you go down, think about driving your hips back to stretch your hamstrings really well.

[▶ Exercise Index - Pull Through](#)

This is an example of what it could look like:

Feeder set - 100 lbs. x 4 reps

Work sets - 150 lbs. x 3 sets of 8

5/ Seated calf raises

I want to really burn your calves up here with some higher reps. Give me 3 sets of 15 after a couple feeder sets and a warm up. Fast forward to 2:29 in the video so you can see the form I want on the seated calf raise. Just like the standing version, NO bouncing out of the bottom, and then drive all the way up onto your toes. This exercise locks your legs in, so you get zero assistance from your quads and hamstrings. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

This is an example of what it could look like:

Warm up set - 45 lbs. for 20 reps

Feeder set - 90 lbs. for 6 reps

Feeder set - 135 lbs. for 6 reps

Work sets - 185 lbs. for 3 sets of 15

Note: Your instinct when these start to burn is to fly through the set.....do not do that. Calves burn like no other body part and its why most have less than stellar development.

▶ [Freaky 12 Set 3 Exercise Calf Workout](#)

6/ Rope crunches

Last thing for the week. Rope crunches are great for your upper abs and will really challenge you. Give me 3 sets of 15 reps here with a moderate weight. I want you to use a tricep rope, drop down on your knees, get a full contraction, blow all your air out, then come up to a full stretch. If you do that on all 45 reps, you may have some serious ab cramps afterwards. **3 total work sets**

RPE - 9 | Rest - 1 minute

Note: Just like with seated calf raises, most people just fly through this exercise with zero thought or intent. This is not us, make sure every single rep you are trying to make it harder and harder of a rep.

▶ [Get Washboard abs with this killer ab workout](#)

SATURDAY, SUNDAY - OFF

Did you make it through?? If so let me know on Instagram at [mountaindog1](#)



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Thank you so much for your support!

John Meadows