



CT'S Modern Strength

Newsletter for the serious strength athlete

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The Beast Speaks

Welcome to the first edition of my *Modern Strength* newsletter. I intend to make it into one of the best free sources of training related information around. We will cover subjects such as training for limit strength, gaining muscle mass, increasing power and athletic performance as well as loosing body fat.

I've never been one for long, speeches ... but I really hope that you can get something out of this newsletter; this is my way of saying thank you for your support and loyalty. Okay, before we get all emotional, let's go on with the show!

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Exercise of the month

The decline pullover

From my experience this is one of the best exercises to build up the latissimus dorsi, giving you that wide, "V-shape" from the back.

The execution is rather simple. It's the set-up that can be a bit tricky. You'll have to set up a decline bench in front of a low pulley station with a triceps rope attached. Lie down on the bench so that the rope is above your head.

The starting position has you in a fully extended position. You perform the exercise by executing a pullover motion (keeping the arms straight) focusing on your lats the whole time. Really emphasise a wide pullover arc; this will hit the lats the hardest.

You lower the weight slowly, again in a wide arc, and return to the fully stretched position. Hold the stretched position for one or two seconds to get rid of momentum and to increase hypertrophy stimulation.



(Exercise of the month continued)

I have used a superset of heavy barbell rowing and decline pullover to rapidly build-up a lagging upper back in several of my clients.

That superset is as follow:

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Tempo
A1.Barbell row	4	5	312
A2.Decline pullover	4	10	512

Give it a try as part of your upper back workout; you won't be sorry you did!

The mixed regimen super guns program

Here's a biceps program I've been using with a lot of my clients and it has produced the fastest increase in biceps size and hardness that I've ever seen in my life!

Superset A:

Exercise A1.

Isometric preacher curl for max time

- Use a load that is challenging (i.e. a load that you would struggle to do for more than 5 perfect reps).

- You are going to hold the weight at a determined position for as long as you can ... aim for at least 45-60 seconds

- You are going to use 3 different positions: 1) elbows at 90 degrees, 2) Elbows fully flexed, 3) 2" from the bottom position

- You do 2 sets for each position

Exercise A2.

Standing barbell curl

- After each set of isometric preacher curl for max time you perform one set of 10 barbell curls. Don't worry about tempo, just complete the reps with as much weight as you can.

- So you are basically going to do 6 sets of 10 barbell curls.

To make it clear, this first superset will look like this:

1) Isometric preacher - elbows 90 degrees for max time

no rest

2) Barbell curl x 10 reps

45-60 seconds rest

3) Isometric preacher - elbows 90 degrees for max time

no rest

4) Barbell curl x 10 reps

45-60 seconds rest

5) Isometric preacher - elbows fully flexed for max time

no rest

6) Barbell curl x 10 reps

45-60 seconds rest

7) Isometric preacher - elbows fully flexed for max time

no rest

8) Barbell curl x 10 reps

45-60 seconds rest

9) Isometric preacher - elbows almost fully extended

no rest

10) Barbell curl x 10 reps

45-60 seconds rest

11) Isometric preacher - elbows almost fully extended

no rest

12) Barbell curl x 10 reps

45-60 seconds rest

(Super guns continued)

Superset B:

Exercise B1.

Superslow reverse curl

- Lift the bar in 3 seconds
- Lower it in 10 seconds
- You do 10 reps per set

Exercise 2.2.

Hammer curl

- Lift the weight as fast as you can
- Lower it in 2 seconds
- Use as much weight as you can (you can even cheat a little)
- Do 5 reps per set

* You repeat that superset 2 times with 45 seconds of rest between both supersets.

Exercise 3 (not a superset):

Barbell curl extended set

- Use a challenging load (a load that you can do for 5 reps)
- Perform as much reps as you can with that weight; rest 15 seconds and do a few more reps; rest 10 seconds and do a few more reps; rest 5 seconds and do 1-2 more reps.
- Only perform one such set.

Exercise 4: BUY A NEW SHIRT AS YOUR ARMS WONT FIT IN YOUR OLD ONES!!!

Leanness and performance: a periodized nutritional approach

With summer fast approaching, we all want to look good *nekkid*. This obviously requires that you to carry some decent muscle mass, but especially

that you have the lowest amount of body fat possible. So what we want to do is loose the fat and keep the muscle.

With my athletes I will use a step approach, aimed at improving their body's capacity to assimilate nutrients. The result is a spectacular loss of body fat, full maintenance (even gains) in muscle mass and improved performance.

There are 4 "steps" to the program. With each step lasting 3 weeks.

Step	Description
Step 1 Weeks 1-3	Targeted ketogenic diet. You eat only protein and (good) fat during the whole day except for a 50g carbs "spike" immediately after your workout. Daily protein intake is set at 2.0-2.5g per pound of body weight.
Step 2 Weeks 4-6	Increased PW carbs. The daily schedule remains the same, but you bump the post-workout carbs spike to 100g.
Step 3 Weeks 7-9	Ketogenic diet. You remove all carbs completely, ingesting only protein and fats all day. Protein is set at 2.5-3.0g per pound of body weight. Post-workout carbs are replaced by 20g of BCAA and 20g of glutamine. Glutamine has gotten a bad rep, but during dieting it's useful as it's a gluconeogenic amino acid (it can be converted to into muscle glycogen).
Step 4 Weeks 10-12	50/50 diet. You eat 6 meals during the day, 3 of which are protein and fat only (no carbs) and 3 of which are protein and carbs only (no fat). The protein + carbs meals are to be consumed: post-workout, 1 hour post-workout and 3 hours post-workout. Around 50g per sitting is a good target.

Weight releasers: Theory and Application

(From *Theory and Application of Modern Strength and Power Methods*)

Weight releasers are one of the most important tools that a coach can buy. Furthermore they're inexpensive, which makes it a *most for the least* deal! I personally use this tool in the training of almost all of my athletes, and it constitutes a significant part of their yearly program.

Releasers are quite simple to understand. Basically we're talking about hooks which are attached to the bar and loaded with weight. The hooks hang down lower than the bar, so as you lower the bar, the releasers will contact the ground, "unhooking" them from the bar, *releasing* some of the load.

They thus allow an athlete to lower more weight than he lifts. As it was mentioned in the first chapter of this book, the eccentric portion of a movement is responsible for a lot of strength and size gains. However since you are always stronger during the eccentric portion of the lift, the stimulation you can place on your body during that part of a lift will always be limited by your concentric (overcoming) strength. So basically it becomes very hard to increase the tension magnitude during the eccentric portion of regular exercises. All you can really do is increase the duration of the lowering phase. This indeed increase the stimulation placed on the muscles during the eccentric action, but it is somewhat limited for athletes wanting to increase their maximal strength level.

An alternative is to have a partner push down on the bar during the eccentric

portion of the lift. I've used this technique myself and it does work. However it becomes very hard to quantify the training process. How much resistance did you add during the eccentric portion? 45lbs, 35lbs, 100lbs? You really can't tell. So this method can be useful, but it's also limitative.

Releasers on the other hand allow you to add resistance during the eccentric portion of a lift, knowing exactly how much more was added. This makes training quantification easy.

For example, below the first athlete has 455lbs on the bar, plus 65lbs of releasers per side (total of 130lbs). The second athlete has 315lbs on the bar plus 65lbs of releasers per side. Both performed 5 singles with that load. So they would write down the following in their journal:



5 x 1 @ 585/455



5 x 1 @ 445/315

(Weight releasers continued)

As you can see, you can know exactly what's going on with the athlete's training.

In this short chapter I will describe three training methods using the weight releasers. I will then give you a few tips and recommendations on how to use them safely and effectively.

The three training methods we will discuss are **maximal eccentrics**, **contrast training** and **overshoot training**.

Maximal eccentrics

With this training technique an athlete should work up to the maximum weight he can lower under control. For safety purposes (and effectiveness) my athletes must lower the bar in 5 seconds during a maximal eccentric exercise. If they can't lower it in 5 seconds, it's too heavy. Some will argue that it's not a true maximum, I agree, but the overload is more than enough to stimulate positive gains in strength. And no athlete has ever gotten stronger in the hospital!

You start the exercise with 50-100lbs less than your maximum set on the bar (e.g. if your bench press maximum is 400lbs, the bar weight would be 300-350lbs). This won't change during the workout. I choose that load because I don't like to add too much weight to the releasers (it could damage them) but I don't want to use a bar weight that turns the exercise into a maximal concentric exercise. There is a place and time for a combination of maximal eccentric and maximal concentric but this first method focuses only on the eccentric part. Since

we are doing only single reps, the load during the concentric portion will be easy and not stressful at all on the body.

The starting weight for the combination of releasers + bar weight should be equal to your concentric maximum. For example, if your maximum is 400lbs and that the bar weight is 330lbs you should use 70lbs in releasers (35lbs per side). You add weight to the releasers with each set until you can no longer lower the load under control in 5 seconds. Most individuals will be able to use 110-130% of their concentric maximum. But if you do less than that don't feel bad, in fact feel happy! This means that this form of training will increase your limit strength at a faster rate than any other method (since it's a weak point). On the other hand, if you can lower 150% of your maximum or more, this type of training won't be very effective for you because limit eccentric strength is not a limiting factor in your performance level.

This training method has several positive impacts on performance. First it can increase eccentric, isometric and concentric strength to a large extent. This is mostly due to neural adaptations, but also to some structural changes. It also increases the athlete's capacity to control an important external force, which can be useful on the playing field. Psychologically it helps getting used to holding heavy weights, so when you attempt a concentric maximum, it will feel lighter by comparison, giving you a psychological boost. There is also some evidence that lowering big weights offer more than a psychological benefit: it's possible to desensitize the Golgi Tendon Organs and Muscle Spindles by using

(Weight releasers continued)

such technique. This will allow you to use a greater proportion of your strength potential due to a lowered neural inhibition. Lastly, since this is a form of accentuated eccentric training, it will lead to significant structural changes. Since the duration of a set is relatively low, it will take many sets to build up a cumulative stimulation sufficient to lead to muscle gains. But in the long run this method can have a very positive effect on functional hypertrophy. I never use this technique more than once per week with my athletes, and never for longer than 6 straight weeks, more often then not it's used in a 3-weeks block.

Contrast training

Contrast training refers to using a load that is equally challenging during both the eccentric and concentric portion of a lift. Since we're stronger during the eccentric portion, the only way this method can be applied is to add resistance during the eccentric part of the exercise.

To properly select the training load it's important to know both your concentric and eccentric maximums on the lift you intend to use. For example, your bench press 1RM could be 400lbs and your maximal eccentric bench press (lowered in 5 seconds) could be 475lbs. Since we want to use the same relative load during both phases of the movement, both the bar weight and releaser weight must be carefully selected.

For example, if you want to train at 80% the loads should be:

a. Bar weight (concentric portion) = $400\text{lbs} \times 80\% = 320\text{lbs}$

b. Releasers weight + bar weight (eccentric portion) = $475\text{lbs} \times 80\% = 380\text{lbs}$

c. Releasers weight = $380\text{lbs} - 320\text{lbs} = 60\text{lbs}$ (30lbs each side)

So to recap our athlete choosing to train at 80% would use a bar weight of 320lbs and add 30lbs to each releaser. This way he lowers 80% of his eccentric maximum and lift 80% of his concentric maximum.

This training method should be performed for multi-reps sets. Since the releasers must be replaced on each repetition I suggest two approaches:

1. Cluster training: perform 5-8 single reps with around 5-10 seconds of rest between them. After each rep you rack the bar and replace the releasers (or have a partner replace them).

2. Paused training: you also perform 5-8 reps but after each rep you hold the bar at arms length while two partners simultaneously replace the releasers.

I prefer option no.1 myself. Option no.2 being a bit riskier, for example the spotters could replace the releasers with a slight delay between them; this could lead to an injury. However option no.2 has the advantage of keeping the muscles under load for a longer period of time, which may be slightly better for hypertrophy purposes.

Since the fatigue factor might be more important (because of the added eccentric loading) you might be able to complete 1-2 less reps than during a concentric emphasis set for the same relative load. The following table

(Weight releasers continued)

indicates good reps target to shoot for at given loads.

Load	Minimum reps	Maximum reps	Average
95%	1	2	1
90%	1	4	2
85%	3	6	4
80%	5	8	6
75%	6	11	8
70%	8	13	10

This method is especially effective at stimulating maximum hypertrophy in a very short period of time because the stimulation is equivalent during both phases of the movement. Remember to always perform the eccentric portion in 5 seconds (since your eccentric maximum is based on a 5 seconds effort).

It's also a method that is effective at increasing eccentric and concentric strength at the same rate, at the same time. Which can be useful for some athletes who already have a proper eccentric strength/concentric strength balance.

Overshoot training

Overshoot refers to a sur-activation of the fast-twitch motor units during the eccentric portion of the lift allowing the athlete to be more explosive during the following concentric portion. In many regards this works the same way as depth jumps and other high impact plyometric drills.

We will accomplish this overshoot by lowering a heavy load during the eccentric portion and lifting a light load as fast as possible. The eccentric portion doesn't have to be as controlled as

during the preceding two methods. Lowering the load in 2 seconds is adequate.

The bar weight should be around 50-60% of your concentric maximum and you add another 30-40% on the releasers. For example, an athlete who can bench press 400lbs would use the following:

a. Bar weight = 400lbs x 50% = 200lbs

b. Releasers weight = 400lbs x 40% = 160lbs (80lbs per side)

We want to perform sets of 2-4 reps using this method. However the releasers are only used on the first rep. The overshoot phenomenon being maintained for the whole set provided that acceleration is maintained at the maximum possible level.

Tip and recommendations

1. Before each utilization make sure that the releasers are in working order. If the steel rod becomes slightly bent, I suggest buying new ones as they may become hazardous.
2. Make sure that both releasers release in the same direction.
3. Find out the perfect rod length (which is adjustable) for you. Not all peoples are built the same way. We want the releasers to drop when the bar is 1-2'' from the chest (bench press) or at parallel (squat).
4. Make sure to lower the bar under control. A good way to see if you're

(Weight releasers continued)

doing this is if the releasers unhook at the same time.

Conclusion

All three of the methods presented have been used by me and other coaches quite successfully. When used properly they can greatly enhance the training effect. And for some athletes this method is even a necessity (those with a low eccentric strength capacity).

However avoid being over-enthusiastic. Don't do too much too soon! I know that for us coaches and athletes, buying a new training tool is like receiving our Christmas present: we want to play with it all the time! However since these methods are all very stressful on both the nervous and musculoskeletal system, you should start doing the minimum effective amount of work and *very slowly* build up as your capacities improve. If you have never trained using accentuated eccentrics you won't need a lot of stimulation to improve drastically, in fact doing too much work would be like using a hammer to kill a fly: it might work, but it's unnecessary and might cause some damage.

Q & A

Question 1:

Hi,

I was wondering if you could do an article on this, maybe a roundtable, or atleast reply with your opinions.

People often believe that incline hits upper chest, flat bench hits all over and decline hits lower.

I don't believe you can isolate parts of the chest, definitely not left from right since the fibres run horizontally but I doubt you can

isolate it top from bottom, similar to one of your articles where an expert said how you can't isolate abs.

Answer 1:

Well this discussion could be never ending as there's a lot of conflicting info floating around on this subject. Consider this:

1. There is such a thing as *sternal* and *clavicular* portions of the pectoralis major. Both portions do share more than a few similar functions at the shoulder joint (transverse flexion, internal rotation, adduction, transverse adduction). However both portions also have some differing functions. For example the *sternal* portion is a shoulder extensor (as in a pullover or straight-arms cable pushdown) while the *clavicular* portion is a shoulder flexor (as in a front raise). The *clavicular* head is also involved in shoulder abduction (as in a lateral raise) while the *sternal* portion isn't. And finally the *sternal* head is involved in several actions of the scapula while the *clavicular* portion doesn't play a role in such actions.

HOWEVER, you'll notice that both muscles are involved in the joint action present in all lying pressing movements (incline bench, decline bench, flat bench) and flies (incline flies, decline flies, flat flies). So it would *seem* that it's impossible to isolate each portion of the pectoralis major. It's true that it is not possible to isolate one while blocking out the other. But it *is* possible to vary the relative importance of each portion during an exercise. For example, an incline press with the elbows out wide on the way down (stretching the *clavicular* head) will involve the "upper chest" more than the rest. However in all

(Q & A continued)

type of pressing or flying movements, both portions will receive some stimulation.

2. There's no such thing as a lower pectoral portion, so declines will not target that portion (since it doesn't exist). However a decline press does place the pectoralis major and triceps in a very advantageous biomechanical position (and the range of motion possible is shorter) while greatly reducing the implication of the front deltoid. As such many peoples will feel a more intense pectoral contraction (it's easier to get a peak pectoral contraction with your arm facing down than up). However this doesn't necessarily equate to better growth stimulation and it certainly doesn't mean greater lower pectoral development. I personally like the decline bench for one reason: my shoulders are so strong compared to my chest that during any form of pressing other than decline press and dips my pectorals take a back seat to the shoulders.

3. There is some evidence that the type of muscle contraction has a location-specific response; eccentric training leading to more hypertrophy in the distal portions (closer to the tendons) of the muscle while concentric training lead to more hypertrophy in the mid-point (muscle belly) of the muscle (Seger et al. 1998). So it *is* possible that a method emphasizing peak concentric contraction (squeezing hard at the end of the movement in the fully contracted position) would produce more hypertrophy along the middle portion of the muscle while accentuated eccentrics (either slow eccentrics or supramaximal eccentrics) would produce more

hypertrophy close to both ends of the muscle. So that may be one of the reasons why some people "*feel*" an exercise working on a specific portion of their muscles. In that case, it's not so much a matter of exercise selection but rather a question of exercise execution.

So the bottom line is that there *is* such a thing as an upper chest. However it's not true that you can fully isolate it. You can try to increase the relative participation of the upper chest in some movements, but you cannot isolate it. However it may be possible to stimulate hypertrophy in certain regions of a muscle, not via exercise selection but by exercise performance. However this last point needs to be backed up by more studies.

Question 2:

Some time ago I read your Running man article, about HIIT, intervals and 400m sprints. I'd like to use it but unfortunately because of my job I travel a lot and I can't run outside so the only thing I have is this treadmill that is only 16 km/h max speed. So my question is how I can adjust his program.

Thanx for the help and stay strong.

Leon

Answer 2:

Well with the treadmill you can probably change the incline, which increases difficulty. Another possible alternative is to use an "on-place" movement to replace the high intensity portion of the intervals.

For example:

- 1) 60s jog on the treadmill
 - 2) *Burpees* for 15-30 seconds
- Repeat 6-10 times without any rest

(Q & A continued)

Instead of burpees you can use other movements, such as vertical jumps and running in place, but I find the burpees to be the best choice for that purpose.

Question 3:

I am entering a contest at the Arnold Classic the first weekend of March where you bench 90% of your bodyweight for as many reps as possible. I weigh around 210 and I wondered if you could suggest a training program to train for this.

Chris

Answer 3:

Well, you did left out three important pieces of information: what is your current 1RM in the bench press, how many reps can you currently do with 190-200lbs and how many reps are you shooting for at the contest.

For example, if your bench pres 1RM is around 400lbs you should be able to handle 20-25 reps easily with 190-200lbs and could probably get up to 35-40+ with proper training. However if you can bench press 300lbs you will probably be able to only complete 9-15 reps with 190-200lbs, and maybe attain 20-25 with proper training.

Furthermore, if you currently can do 20 reps with 200lbs, it would not be realistic to shoot for 60 reps within three months!

But I'm still going to give you a few pointers.

1) Understand that there are two physical components involved in this test: a) **limit strength** (the stronger you are, the lower

will the weight be compared to your max capacity) and b) **strength-endurance**. So for maximum results you should be training both capacities.

2) Include two bench press workouts per week. The first one is a limit strength workout in which you will use weights ranging from 85 to 100% for sets of 1-5 reps. The objective is to push up your bench press as much as you can. The second workout is a specific strength-endurance workout in which you will work on the quality needed for your test.

3) For this second day take the current number of reps you can do with 200lbs (for example 20 reps). And add 20 (in our example, 40). This is your target number of reps for the special strength workout. What you are going to do is use 200lbs and do the entire 40 reps. Start off by doing a max reps set with the 200lbs, when you cannot complete one more rep, rest for 20 seconds, reset and perform as many reps as you can. Continue in this fashion until you have reached the target number of reps. Your objective is to complete the reps in less and less "sets" each week.

For example, if your target number is 40...

1. 200lbs, reps till failure ... lets say that you complete 19 reps (you have 21 left)
2. Rest 20 sec. and resume the set, let's say that you do 7 more reps (you have 14 left)
3. Rest 20 sec. and resume the set, let's say that you do 5 more reps (you have 9 left)
4. Rest 20 sec. and resume the set, let's say that you do 5 more reps (you have 4 left)

(Q & A continued)

5. Rest 20 sec. and resume the set, let's say that you do the last 4 reps

Then complete the workout with 3 sets of your target number of reps (in our example 40) on dumbbell bench press and dumbbell incline press.

Do this for 8-weeks. You should be able to gain 10-15 reps on your max reps effort with 200lbs, some will gain up to the targeted 20 while some may only get 5-9. But if your nutrition is good and you rest sufficiently, you should be able to reach 10-15.

Also, and this is very important: every three weeks you can (and should) perform this special-strength workout with 210lbs instead of 200lbs. Then get back to 200lbs. So basically:

week 1 = 200lbs
week 2 = 200lbs
week 3 = 210lbs
week 4 = 200lbs
week 5 = 200lbs
week 6 = 210lbs
week 7 = 200lbs
week 8 = 200lbs

Hope this helps.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me at the_beast@t-mag.com

Training to maintain post-cycle gains

Whether we like it or not, the use of androgenic-anabolic steroids is part of the strength training world. I'm not here to judge those who use nor to condone the use of such substances.

Since those who use steroids will eventually have to come off at some time, I feel that its important to teach the proper way to train after a cycle to maintain your muscle gains. A lot has already been said about what substances to use to help you recover after a cycle, but little is known about the whole training aspect.

First, here are some of the biggest mistakes made by those coming off a cycle:

1. Too much volume: When you stop your cycle you will undoubtedly *lose intramuscular water*. Steroids helps to promote intramuscular glycogen and creatine storage. So while you are "on" your muscles are swelled up with nutrients, water and minerals. This makes for great "pumps" in the gym (and even outside the gym). However when your cycle comes to an end you lose this cell volumizing effect and as a result it becomes harder to get a mind-blowing pump. This is normal and to be expected. However trainees often panic because they're not getting that marvellous pump anymore. As a result they end up greatly increasing their training volume, adding more intensive techniques such as supersets, drop sets etc. All in the hope of being able to attain a pump similar to what they experienced while "on".

The problem is that after a cycle your body has a lowered capacity to synthesize muscle proteins *and* there's a rebound cortisol increase. Cortisol is a catabolic hormone, and while it's needed for maximum adaptation, when there's too much of it you lose muscle mass.

(Training to maintain continued)

So after a cycle your body is:

a) *less efficient as repairing damages made to the muscles*

b) *more efficient at breaking down the muscles.*

The worst thing to do in that situation is to use a high training volume and frequency. Immediately post-cycle you're not going to stimulate muscle growth. By trying too hard to do so you'll actually end up catabolizing, and losing, the muscle tissue you already have!

So high volume and intensive techniques (supersets, drop sets, etc.) are not good ideas post-cycle as you can now see.

2. Going too light: I'll say it once and for all ... your priority after a cycle should be to try everything in your power to maintain your strength levels as they are. After a cycle your body will want to return to homeostasis, and if you don't give it a good reason to preserve the gained muscle mass, you'll lose it!

Decreasing training weights after a cycle (oftentimes while increasing volume) is one of the fastest way to lose your hard earned muscle! In the 2-3 weeks after a cycle you should switch to a limit strength-training approach: going heavy (80-90%) on a few basic exercises while taking relatively long rest intervals and using a very low volume of work.

Maintaining strength post-cycle is one of the cornerstones to maintaining muscle size.

3. Too much frequency: After a cycle

athletes become so paranoid about losing their muscles that they tend to train too often. This is due to the psychological factors involved, but also to the decrease in *myogenic tone* that occurs after a cycle. As I already mentioned, after a cycle you'll lose the cell volumization effect of steroids. Now, in the gym that means less important pumps. But outside the gym it also means that your tonus (I know, we all hate that word!) or muscle hardness will be much lower. When you're used to feeling pumped all the time this can be hard to accept. So in order to correct the situation athletes are tempted to train very often, just to feel their muscles.

Remember that after a cycle your body has a lowered capacity to adapt to training-induced physiological stress. So for any given training session, the adaptation period will be much longer. If you train too often, just as if you train too much, you will breakdown more muscle while actually building less! Not a good deal if you ask me!

4. Too little food: After a cycle you will often feel physically softer and slightly depressive. This state of mind and body will lead you to become paranoid about gaining fat. For that reason, many people actually decrease caloric intake too much post cycle; trying to maintain both super-low body fat levels *and* muscle after a cycle is extremely hard to do. Prioritize: do you want to keep the muscles you gained? Then you must actually INCREASE daily caloric intake post-cycle. Always remember that food is the ultimate anabolic! The more you eat post cycle, the more you'll maintain muscle mass. First because of the sheer increase in nutrients availability (thus

(Training to maintain continued)

less need to catabolize muscle tissue) but also because of the ensuing hormonal responses. Eating a lot will increase insulin levels, which increases nutrient uptake by the muscles. Insulin also acts to counteract the catabolic effect of cortisol by stopping muscle breakdown in its tracks. There's also some evidence that large caloric intakes lead to an increase in testosterone levels. So after a cycle EAT MORE not less! You'll gain a little fat, which you'll easily lose later on. Your priority should be to maintain your muscle mass.

A good strategy I often recommend is to **drastically decrease caloric intake 1-2 weeks before the end of a cycle**. For example, if you do a 12-week cycle, during weeks 11 and 12 you should decrease caloric intake significantly (by 20% or so). You should also decrease protein intake to the minimum necessary level (around 0.7g per pound of bodyweight). Don't worry you won't lose muscle at this point (you will lose weight, but not muscle). **Then immediately after your cycle you should almost double your caloric and protein intake for 3-4 days**. This will lead to a great rebound anabolic effect which will greatly help you in the early stage of post-cycle recovery. After the 4th day, decrease your caloric intake (but it should still be kept relatively high) while maintaining protein intake. Stay on this regimen for 7-14 days (so the super high caloric intake lasts 14-21 depending on how your body responds).

Expect to gain 2-3lbs of fat during that period. But if that 2-3lbs can help you avoid losing 10lbs of muscle it's worth it! And as I mentioned, it will be easy to lose the excess flab a bit later on.

After those initial 14-21 days slowly decrease caloric intake to your baseline level.

During the first 3 weeks of your post-cycle recovery program you should train at a frequency of 3 times per week with minimal volume at each session. I would recommend sticking to compound movements such as the *bench press*, *squat*, *deadlift*, *leg press*, *chins*, *barbell rowing*, etc. Perform 2-4 exercises per session. A push/pull/legs routine is good at this point. Something like the following is an appropriate approach:

Monday			
Exercise	Sets	Reps	Load
Bench press	4	5	85%
Military press	4	5	85%
Dips	4	5	85%
Wednesday			
Barbell row	4	5	85%
Barbell shrugs	4	5	85%
Lat pulldown	4	5	85%
Friday			
Back squat	4	5	85%
Romanian dead.	4	5	85%

I recommend using 4-6 reps with 85-90% of your maximum for 4-5 sets per exercise. Try hard to increase the loads every week. The more strength you maintain (or even gain) during that time, the more muscle you'll retain.

Hope this helps!

Back to school

Use only what you need to get you where you want to be

Pride; a double-edge sword that can make or break a strength-coach or athlete. When it comes to training you must have a certain amount of pride:

the desire to be the best will make you look for the best way to train and will drastically increase your willingness to train hard. However having too much pride; placing the desire to be recognized as the best above all else, can be detrimental for a strength-coach. This often gives you a strength-coach who, in his quest to look like he knows a lot about training, will put every training method known to man into his programs. This is what I call “*training method shot gunning*”.

A coach might read about the Olympic lifts, about plyometrics, reactive training, Westside training and the likes and he will immediately try to come up with an inclusive program which will make good use of all the most advanced training methods to be found at the same time. What’s the problem with that? It’s probably the worst way to train athletes!

Please, allow me to demonstrate the preceding point with a little logic...

Fact no.1: *Beginners will progress more easily than advanced athletes (because of the law of trainability);*

Fact no.2: *Since progress is easier for a beginner, simpler training methods will be just as effective as more complex ones;*

Fact no.3: *Since progress is harder for an advanced athlete, he will require more powerful training methods;*

Fact no.4: *After a while, any training method loses its effectiveness;*

Fact no.5: *If you use the more powerful training methods with beginners (who don't need them) you will prevent future*

progress when the athletes really need these methods since they will now be less effective.

So the real task of a coach is not to choose all the best training methods available, but to select which methods are necessary for a certain athlete considering his level of development. Training methods should be kept as simple as needed for progress to occur and more complex methods should be gradually added, only as needed by the state of development of the athlete.

Allow me a quick analogy to explain this very important message more clearly. One must see strength training processes much like our school system. You wouldn’t ask a third grader to write a 20-pages dissertation on the sociological impact of the work of Shakespeare on the post-modern society would you? Obviously not! Same goes for training: a beginner cannot train the same way as an elite. There should be a gradual increase in the difficulty of the training methods used. When an athlete reaches a certain performance threshold he graduates to a more advanced level which uses more complex training means and methods.

Shameless self-promotion

This is the portion of the newsletter in which I try to make some money out of you! Presently I offer the following:

Seminar (5 hours seminar at the location of your choice)	1000.00\$ plus travelling fares
Individualized training program	100.00\$/ month
Individualized nutrition and supplement program	100.00\$/ month
Black Book of Training Secrets (hard copy)	30.00\$
Theory and Application of Modern Strength and Power Methods (.pdf)	25.00\$
Black Book of Training Secrets (.pdf)	25.00\$
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Complete support program	2500.00\$ / 1 year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individualized training program - Nutrition program - Supplements program - Unlimited email support - Once-a-month 60 min. phone consult 	
3300\$ value	

If you are interested in any of these goods/services you can send a check or money order to:

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Featured product: Biotest Hot Rox



Obviously since I'm affiliated with Testosterone magazine, I might sound biased when I talk about **Hot Rox**. However I will tell you that in all my life I've never seen a product, over-the-counter or pharmacological, that is as effective as **Hot Rox** at stimulating maximum fat loss. My physical transformation is now famous, but ever since I started using **Hot Rox** I'm ashamed of my former "after" shape! Yes, I'm much leaner now. Since my diet hasn't changed I attribute my drastic improvements to **Hot Rox**. This product will truly make a huge difference in your fat loss efforts; I am willing to put my head on the stake for this product!

You can get your Hot Rox supplies at the Biotest superstore:

<https://tstore.biotestedge.com/index.jsp>

Thanks for watching and see you next month!