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DISCLAIMER & WARRANTY

The information provided in this guide is for educational purpose only. I am not a doctor, and this is not meant to be taken as a piece of medical advice. The information provided in this guide is based on my experiences as well as my interpretations of the current research available.

Before starting any training program, it is advised to do the following:

1. Consult a medical doctor about your physical condition, and health, try and ascertain whether it is ok to partake in such a recreational bodybuilding exercise. This includes the type of training as well as dietary requirements. Starting a program without addressing these points could result in serious health problems.
2. Consult a qualified and reputable (Personal Trainer) about what exercise program may be suitable for you, your capabilities, and your goals. Many types of exercise should only be done while being supervised by an exercise professional or with a "spotter" for safety reasons, and to reduce the risk of injury. Your personal trainer will advise you about that, and it will be a very valuable investment in your training career.

RISK: All diets and bodybuilding style of training programs come with a risk to physical and mental health. An adequate medical consultation is recommended before starting a serious training plan. If any symptoms develop during a diet or training plan, then prompt medical help is recommended to advise on how to proceed (if at all).

NOT INTENDED FOR MINORS OR NOVICES: This training plan and nutrition guidelines are recommended for adults with at least one-year training experience. If you are under 16 or have less than one year of training experience, then this program is probably not your best option. Always consult your healthcare professional before starting an exercise or nutrition protocol.

WARNING: The products for diet and training feature, may or may not include a warranty from the Seller. The seller of each product will set forth or disclaim warranties if you order a product. However, Fabio Bonanno Coaching does not warrant the fitness or merchantability of any products featured. All products are featured as it is.

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WHO IS THIS FOR?
HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK

Firstly, let me start by saying who this is NOT for and I'll explain why.

I'll save you pages of wasted time in reading another eBook that doesn't work. If you want it the easy way, it's best to put this down now and stop reading. This isn't for you, I mean it, and I'm not here to promise you something that you will never get.

This isn't for anyone wanting a shortcut or a miracle workout plan that will get you a six-pack in six weeks or anything like that.

That's 100% in your hands. If you've half-assed workouts and any plan your whole life, don't expect this to be any different, this will only work if you work.

It really depends on your work ethic, your sacrifices, and how hard you are willing to work.

On that note, there is A LOT of information in this eBook, and I want you to get the most out of it.

There are three ways you can use this, and each has its own benefits and drawbacks, I'll explain this further now.

1. Read every single word in here. You will get the most out of this book if you try to understand all the facts and concepts, I present to you.

Success leaves clues, and I personally believe that by truly understanding how someone operates as well as why they operate that way, you are really able to apply the knowledge learned.

This is the most comprehensive way to absorb everything presented here, but also the most time consuming as I've tried to let you know why I do what I do as well as giving you references to back my points up.

By understanding what you're doing, and why you're doing it, then going on to apply the knowledge you learn, you will find out how to manage your health and fitness. You'll be 90% of the way there. The other 10% you will pick up over time from different educators, personal experience, and your own research.

2. Skim read what you feel is of interest. You might already have some of these concepts applied in your life, and that's fine, if you know something, there's not much point in going into detail on these.

By skim reading, you'll pick up some good points to apply to your training, and "upgrade" what you already have.

You can go on to the training program and have effective results. This is the middle ground that will save you time and get enough value from this.

3. Just do the program.

This will be the quickest way to get something from this, I understand that your time is valuable, so you want to jump straight into the meat, and bones of this.

I don't recommend this as it won't do the program justice, but I do get the fact you're short on time.

What I do want you to do is to completely apply yourself in the training, put a BIG focus on technique, and training intensity. If you do the reps and follow the tempo on the plan, you will get great results.

To truly understand why you're doing what you're doing though, reading the book thoroughly is most recommended.

Worst case scenario is to do the program and read as you go along. You can always do another plan then come back to this when you have understood the concepts or restart it after reading through.

In a world of "fake natty's" (people claiming to be natural with unnatural results), false promises, and selling dreams. Shortcuts are promised, and results usually come in less than 5% of people and I'm here to tell you that it isn't sexy.

It requires persistence, dedication, and hard work day after day.

Patience to overcome obstacles you will regularly come across.

The self-awareness to know when you need help, and not being too proud to ask for it.

The ability to adapt your approach, and still be able to make progress.

Everyone wants to sell their dream to you, but I don't

The dream is sexy, it looks good, and it's VERY marketable, but it isn't real life.

Real-life is filled with obstacles, friends, family, long working hours, travel, injuries, and emotional stress.

If it were as easy as finding the right plan, then everyone would be happy. They would find that plan and results would quickly follow.

Unfortunately, sticking to it (consistency) is one of the hardest things you'll ever do.

That's the real hard work is being consistent, and that's the hardest thing you'll ever do.

Being consistent is simple, yet VERY difficult.

Read that again.

When you look at your favourite physique or fitness professional, the main reason they have achieved what they have is because they show up day in, day out.

They make the consistent effort required to succeed.

They fail often, but they still show up.

Failure is the condiment that makes success taste so sweet.

If you are willing to embrace the struggle, educate yourself, adapt, overcome obstacles that could derail you, then this is for you.

This book is meant for the individual who is sick of wasting time, energy, and money on stuff that doesn't work.

It's backed by over (15) years of fitness experience, and you are getting up to date protocols on what works.

The science and personal application on myself as well as all my previous and current clients.

If you are willing to do ALL that, then carry on reading.

This isn't just for men; females can take this approach to train too. You won't get bulky, and you will look better, stronger, and fitter, more toned, better skinned, and more confident. This is for anyone willing to put in the work to better themselves.

Another point to note is that I'll be adding references throughout, so you know there is actually a science behind this and not just an opinion.

If you're willing to spend the time to read and apply everything here, I can guarantee you'll take your training to the next level.

Set aside an hour or two to go through everything at least once then pick out what you need to know, apply it, and practice moving forward.

Lastly, this is just one method of getting in shape. It might be the best thing for you or the worst thing for you, you might love it, and you might hate it. It's one method of getting in shape, use it as a template and create your own training goals, and programs around it if you want to be more athletic. Do fewer days and add in some bodyweight training combined with running, sprinting, and other similar disciplines. Do more of what you love, that will be the best way ever to make progress.

PLEASE SEE EVERYTHING HERE AS A CULMINATION OF MY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND APPLICATION AS WELL AS SCIENCE. APPROACH IT WITH A CRITICAL MIND AND NEVER TAKE IT AS 100% TRUTH, ALWAYS DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH AND FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF. JUST

BECAUSE I'M BEING THE AUTHORITY HERE, DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD BLINDLY FOLLOW WHAT I'M SAYING.

KEY POINTS

- This is a learning journey that requires a lot of work, get ready to grow, expect to fail, and expect to succeed if you keep applying what you learn.
- You'll be getting science-backed, real-world information which you can use to guarantee results if you have never had any before.
- You'll know how to be self-sufficient and not have to rely on others for your own success.

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WHO IS FABIO BONANNO?

This eBook has been a long time coming. The reason it's taken so long is that I didn't feel what I had was good enough to put out there. In hindsight, it probably was, after reading the average work that so many people actually made money from.

I've been training in the gym for almost (20) years now, starting recreationally and moving onto competing on the European fitness stage.

My background has always been sports, and I found basketball when I was 11, playing for 12 years before having to stop due to knee operations and injuries.

I played across the whole of Scotland and the UK. In Scotland, I was always known as the guy that was "in shape," which made no sense to me as I should be in shape if I'm an athlete. That says a lot about Scottish basketball.

The gym has always been the route of my sanity, happiness, and passion. It's always been there through the good times and bad times. As I grew up, my passion for health and fitness grew and evolved too.

When I hung up the basketball shoes, I quickly found a deeper love for the gym. Missing the constant competition from sport, I started to challenge myself more and more in the gym, and this led to me setting a goal of dieting down for my first photoshoot.

To this day, that first photoshoot was the best shape of my life I've been in, just look at the photos




I had a fair idea of what to do, but still very new to the deeper aspect of getting into some serious shape and condition.

Bodybuilding.com was the answer. I went ketogenic (that is as close to zero carbs as possible and high fats) 5.5 days per week and trained six days per week for 2 hours each time on average. Not the best idea, but one thing that was for sure is that I busted my ass. It was the hardest I've ever worked, and that leads me to why I wrote this book.

A bad plan executed 1000% is better than a perfect plan not executed at all.

However, it doesn't have to be that way. If you combine relentless work ethic with a science-based, smart approach, you can really maximize results without having to spend 2- hours in the gym each time.

From there, I have competed in numerous bodybuilding, and fitness shows coming top 5 in the whole of Europe, and I have never taken any steroids in my whole life. I am proud of that and always have been.

Genetics play a big part in this, but understanding your body, educating yourself on nutrition, exercise, and working your ass off like your life depended on it will get you better results than any guy or girl recreationally taking steroids and training like shit. "I have nothing against people taking steroids if they do it right, even I considered it, but after research, I decided not to."

I pride myself on work ethic and knowledge. Combine these two together inside and outside the gym, and you will be unstoppable. I have to share all my knowledge built up over my 20- years of experience, education, and research.

I have an 8-year engineering career under my belt in Scotland. From there, I pursued my passion for health and fitness. I got qualified as a "Personal Trainer" and moved to London. I have worked in one of the UK's top 5 and top 10 gyms, and now I operate in Marble Arch as well as coaching clients all over the world.

If you want to find out more about me, then here's all my social media links and website.

www.instagram.com/fabiobonanno
www.twitter.com/absbyfabs
https://www.facebook.com/fabiobonannocoaching/
www.fabiobonanno.coach

You'll be doing me a HUGE favour, and I'd appreciate it if you tag me in your workout section, if you are enjoying this program.

If you will do, my Instagram tag is @fabiobonanno and tag this program #absbyfabs

KEY POINTS

- Fabio is a central London based personal trainer and online coach.
- He is a lifelong natural athlete: no steroids and no false promises of unrealistic amounts of progress and muscle mass.
- He prides himself on work ethic, learning, and empowering others to do the same.

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THE MIND MUSCLE CONNECTION

Here is one of the main reasons you probably aren't developing the muscle you want.

Think about it, any muscle that is good in your body, you can probably "activate" it quite well without too much thought, you probably have a good mind muscle connection.

Think about a muscle that is bad in your body, you'll probably struggle to activate that muscle, and it will take A LOT of brainpower to do this.

The mind-muscle connection concept is simple, your brain sends signals to your body consciously as well as subconsciously. You don't tell your heart to beat, but you do have to tell your arm to do a biceps curl.

This concept turns into a skill and has to be mastered to make progress. If you feel something working, then you can make that muscle work harder without even lifting any weight.

Try this experiment now if you don't know what I'm talking about. With your arm by your side, passively touch your shoulder. Now do the same thing but imagine bringing your forearm as close to your bicep as possible and squeeze the hell out of your bicep.

Same movement, completely different outcome, right?

The best bodybuilders in the world usually have a few things in common. The first is usually great genetics, and this will be the most important factor in elite-level muscle development. Some people just build muscle better than others.

The second factor is they know how to train hard with the right intensity and the right exercises (more on this below).

Lastly, they will have an amazing mind muscle connection. This goes without saying.

How can you grow a muscle if you can't feel it working? It's very difficult.

Just by using a good mind muscle connection, you can lift lighter weights and make better progress. Just look at bodybuilders and powerlifters. Who is usually bigger? Bodybuilders, of course, they lift lighter weights, but their mind muscle connection is superior.

Of course, there's another factor like sets, reps, and tempo, etc. (explained below), but the most important thing is to feel a muscle working and practicing this will accelerate your results.

I can't stress this enough, if you want to grow a muscle, WORK ON YOUR MIND MUSCLE CONNECTION.

Practice visualisation and using the target muscles during an exercise will massively increase the activation of that muscle. (1)

Another note on this, more activation doesn't mean you will be stronger. If you want to look your best in terms of aesthetics, forget about how much you're lifting.

Think about this.

If you have a bad mind-muscle connection, bad technique, and you put on more weight, will that help that muscle grow or do more damage?

It will at 100% do more damage, and you'll probably use more other muscles you're trying not to activate and less of what you are.

Lighten the load, practice good technique with good intensity, and watch the results go through the roof.

You want to practice being weak to grow a muscle. Spend time at the beginning and end ranges of motion for that muscle. You'll probably really start to feel that muscle working and see progress as a result of this.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Feeling a muscle by focusing your mind on it increases how much it activates, and this increases the overload and progress you will get.
- You can make an exercise harder without increasing weight just by using the mind muscle connection.
- Combining control and good technique with the mind-muscle connection will accelerate your visual results as well as keep your muscles healthy for longer.

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TIME UNDER TENSION

Here is what is quite often misunderstood in the fitness and training industry, especially for novices.

I actually don't blame them, if you have never been taught or shown then how are you supposed to know the little details?

We've spoken about mind-muscle connection and how important that is for muscular development. Time under tension is how long you use that muscle.

If you're just squeezing a muscle quickly then say goodbye to any kind of gains.

Growing a muscle is about creating overload, and if you are resting at any point during a set of reps, you aren't maximising your growth potential.

1 set of 12 isn't created equal.

Some people will rest and take a breath in between each and every rep.

Here's an example. Think about squats, and if you pause at the top of every rep, you aren't loading your quads, you're loading your joints vertically through bones.

In this instance, if you pause, and take a breath at the top of a squat, then you are letting that muscle recover.

Remember that creating overload is the key to growing ab muscle?

If you were to not rest at the top of a squat, either stop before your legs are straight or just don't pause at the top, that muscle quads in this case along with other muscles wouldn't get a chance to recover.

This creates the overload we need and ultimately, you'll make more progress.

When I explain tempo below, you will understand better.

If you do 12 sets of 1, it will take longer, and you will work the same but with rest.

This means you aren't working maximally.

If you do 1 set of 12, you are constantly working for those 12 reps and in turn creating an overload.

No rest, just continuous use of the muscle creating the mechanical and hormonal overload required to grow muscle.

When you work a muscle continuously, important muscle-building hormones like testosterone and growth hormone are naturally increased, and this compounds the growth effect.

The hardest thing to do is to keep moving without rest when you're tired.

All you want to do is pause and take a breath, speed everything up to "get it done."

Trust me when I say that you are cheating yourself out of results and your body will tell you that when you look in the mirror.

The last few reps should (within reason) look the same speed and intensity as the first few.

You might be shaking like you're having an epileptic fit, but that means you are doing it right.

It's this intensity needed to make the difference from where you are now to where you want to be.

Mohamed Ali said he doesn't start counting until it starts hurting.

If you stop when it hurts or burns, then there's no overload or adaptation. Make the reps count, create enough time under tension to get the results you want.

Most bodybuilding rep ranges are designed to make you work for 40-60 seconds per set, sometimes more.

This ensures you store energy and fill the muscle. It gives you a pump, and you will feel the difference, especially if you're focusing on the mind-muscle connection too.

Next time you do a set, time how long it takes, and I can guarantee 90%+ of people won't be more than 60 seconds of continuous tension, that means no rest in between reps. More on this in the tempo section later.

Often slower rep speeds are better for hypertrophy (muscle gain) than faster rep speeds. (2)

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Time under tension is about using your muscle and not just counting reps.
- All rep schemes are based on energy systems and bouncing, pausing, or stopping will half the results.
- Your muscle should always be working for the whole set, no rest at all, you might even shake during the set if you're not used to it.

TECHNIQUE AND MECHANICAL TENSION

Here is what can make or break the results of a training plan.

Without good technique, you risk being injured, and if you're injured, you can't train that muscle group (if you can train at all).

Ever put your back out doing deadlifts? Or even outside of the gym?

It's horrible, you can't do anything, you get angry, pissed off at the world, and you just don't feel good.

Making sure you nail your technique is key to making sure you are training for a long time (decades) into your older years and ultimately, having a fun and healthy life.

It will save you unnecessarily beating up your joints and creating muscular imbalances.

The technique is so important when looking at developing muscle. Combine this with the mind muscle connection, and watch your workouts go through the roof.

Here's the thing though, to grow a muscle, it's not about lifting more weight and being stronger, and it's more about being LESS efficient.

What does this mean?

Let's make a comparison. Look at powerlifters compared to bodybuilders.

Both are relatively strong; however, a powerlifter is strong and *efficient* a bodybuilder is strong and *inefficient*.

A powerlifter can often deadlift and squat more than a bodybuilder of the same weight, they're often smaller and have a much higher strength to weight ratio.

A good bodybuilder works on creating the most stress on a specific muscle.

Yes, weight creates growth and overload on a muscle, but more weight isn't the goal if you're not activating what you should be.

This is where technique and mechanical tension come into play. The more a muscle moves, the more it has to work.

You will get more growth if you take a muscle through a full range of motion instead of a partial rep.

A powerlifter tries to shorten the range of motion to allow more weight lifted.

A bodybuilder lengthens the range of motion to activate more muscle.

This means spending more time when the muscle is fully shortened and fully lengthened.

Unfortunately for those of you with an ego, this will mean you lift less weight if you do it right.

You've probably seen or heard it before. "How much do you bench bro?"

More weight for half reps will get less progress than less weight with perfect execution.

You have to ask yourself, "do I want to build muscle, or do I want to be strong?"

If you want to be strong, load that bar up, and focus on overload. Go for it! That's not the goal of this training approach.

If you want to look good and have more quality muscle, then you have to master the art of technique and to create tension.

This isn't easy and requires lots of trial and error. The best way to figure this out is to go to someone who knows what they're talking about.

Don't listen to the bro or old guy in the gym who thinks he knows best.

Have you ever taken financial advice from a broke friend?

Ever taken relationship advice from someone who has never had a proper partner?

Ever taken business advice from someone who works a 9-5 they don't care about?

Usually, it doesn't work out.

If someone is fat, out of shape or never been in shape, then it's probably a good idea to avoid that person's advice.

There is no short cut to this, only hard work, learning, and applying. Don't read this book and not apply it.

The goal here is for you to take control of your own training.

If you're at this stage and wasted years of training and hard work, then now is the time to stop wasting your efforts.

Regretting the past doesn't get you anywhere.

Your past doesn't define you. Your present-day actions do.

Make a promise to yourself now to commit to the art of progress, learning, and developing.

Getting better at every opportunity you can.

Finishing off this section, the key points in developing quality muscle is to master the proper technique, understand what muscles primary functions are (their specific action, usually moving a bone in a certain direction without any other muscles coming into play) and leave the ego at the door.

Looking good isn't about how much weight you can shift it's about how you shift that weight.

You can lose half the weight, and it can feel twice as heavy if you do it right.

It's really about understanding how your body works. One exercise could work perfectly for me and not at all for you.

We are all structurally different, and our muscles are of different lengths, shapes, and sizes.

Creating mechanical tension has general rules and principles. If you do an exercise with the right technique, then you should feel it.

Apart from much more biomechanical analysis, if you do everything in this eBook, you will 100% feel a difference if you haven't before.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- How you perform an exercise is a lot more important than the exercise itself.
- Creating more overload is often about making yourself feel weaker, not stronger.
- You'll have to work harder lifting less weight to make more progress

TEMPO

Here's a variable that can change the game for you.

Taking specific muscle imbalances out of the equation and technique issues, you will get great results with this.

A lot of these concepts cross over and are similar to each other, so if you put them all together, you will get a much greater positive effect.

Tempo, combined with a good mind-muscle connection as well as the right mechanical tension, is going to overload your muscle to get the results you want.

Tempo is essentially the rep speed.

As stated earlier in the "time under tension" section, your muscles develop with the load on them over a continuous time, without stopping!

Tempo helps determine that time and speed.

Powerlifters won't really have a tempo. They'll control down and explode up, it's not about growing muscle for them, it's about being strong, and faster is usually better.

For the purpose of this eBook and bodybuilders in general, tempo is super important.

It helps you feel a muscle, overcome plateaus, create overload, and make progress if performed correctly.

The most tempo is written in the universal format of 4 numbers, e.g., 4111 or you might see it as 4-1-1-1.

Each number represents a specific part of the rep.

For the purpose of this eBook, all tempo will follow these rules.

- The first number is the lowering or lengthening phase.
- The second is the pause in the lengthened or stretched position.
- The third number is the lifting or contracting phase.
- The fourth number is the shortened or the squeeze position.

Mastering these numbers will be the key to maximising the use and overload of your muscle.

If it still doesn't make sense, let me try and break it down with a practical example.

We'll use a tempo of 4111 for this.

Take a biceps curl. The first number is always the lowering phase, so that would be from the top of the movement to the bottom.

4- Seconds lowering.

The next number is the stretched or lengthened position so with your arm straight, you'll hold that for a count of 1 second.

Side note, make sure your muscle is still active and not just lengthened and passive, hanging on the joint, you actively have to feel it working in that position.

You then contract for 1 second, the lifting phase.

The last number is the shorted phase or the "squeeze." You'll squeeze at the top for a count of 1 second. Again, this isn't passive make sure you are squeezing as hard as possible.

These numbers are designed to stop you from cheating. If you stick to the count, you will make progress for sure.

This includes the last rep when you're most tired.

Ever notice that you speed up as the set goes on?

Again, stick to the count no matter what, and you will work harder.

The goal is to try and make it harder to make progress, not easier.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- Tempo determines rep speed, stick to the count.
- Each number relates to a specific part of the rep, and you shouldn't speed up any part.
- Each set is usually continuous use of the muscle, and nothing is ever passive unless stated.

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GROWTH MINDSET AND WHY IT MATTERS

I think it's about time we start speaking about mind-set.

All this information is great, but if you are forever in this program hoping, and wishing for the next best thing, then this will do nothing for you.

If you've read everything I've given you above, then you should have figured out by now it's not what you do, it's how you do it.

You see, with a growth mind-set, you're not looking for the easy way out, the shortcuts or to do "just enough."

The key to being great at anything is to find your weakness, to fail often, to learn, adapt, and get better each time you try.

The same with training.

Don't do the bare minimum to get the results you want. As a general rule, I always say "be prepared to work twice as hard and twice as long as you think you have to."

The amount of work you have to do for little results can get pretty upsetting after a certain amount of time. The longer you've been training (properly), the less muscle you can put on.

Check out the graph below for expectations.

Years of proper training	Potential rate of muscle gain per year	Per month
1	9-11kg (20-25lbs.)	1kg (2lbs.)
2	4.5-5.5kg (10-12lbs.)	0.5kg (1lb.)
3	2.3-2.7kg (5-6lbs.)	0.25kg (0.5lb.)
4	0.9-1.2kg (2-3lbs.)	Not worth calculating
5+	0.45kg (1lb.)	Not worth calculating

So, after a certain amount of time, you can see that expecting anything worth talking about with regards to muscle gain is almost pointless.

You have to have a mind-set of being better for the sake of it.

"Champions enjoy the process of becoming one more than actually winning."

Basically, what this quote says is that the true champion acts, trains and performs like one, no matter what the outcome, if you're glory hunting, you can forget it.

Failures will be many and often, you won't be rewarded straight away, nor will you be rewarded in a few weeks.

If you work hard, day in, day out, be happy in this mind-set and attitude, you will enjoy the process a whole lot more.

The difference between someone successful and someone who "fails" a lot is one gives up, and one doesn't.

Most of the time, the person you look up to isn't doing anything better than you, they have just been doing it longer than you, and this is what separates them from the general population.

To truly make this program (and your whole training career) successful, you need to;

- be open to new ideas
- learn as you go
- work as hard as you can, as often as you can, given your situation that day
- be coachable
- look to work on your weaknesses
- know that you can have bad days, just don't let them turn into bad weeks or even months

- be willing to do more even when it isn’t essential
- Know when to stop (injuries etc.)

It’s pretty simple. Here’s the thing though, the simplest things can be the most difficult to do.

Everyone can have a good workout, a good meal, a good night’s sleep.

Doing this every day is the hard thing.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Be happy with the work and grind of getting better and don’t do it for the trophy
- Always look to learn and apply more quality to your training and life in general
- Be content with failures and lessons

GENETICS

I feel I have to speak about this to make you fully aware of a few things. I'll elaborate on realistic expectations in the next goal setting section too.

Genetics are a very real thing. They are pre-determined by your DNA, and you can't change the structure of your muscles.

This means if you look at your favourite bodybuilder's body part and you have different insertion points; you won't have a muscle that looks like that.

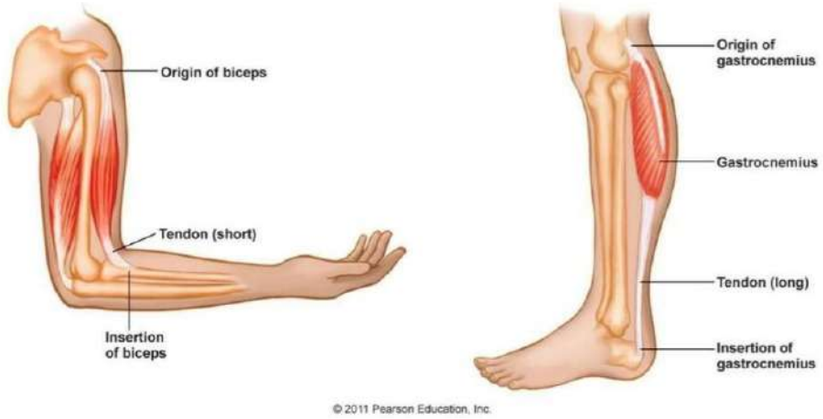
Look at the picture below to see what I mean.

Taking the size difference out of the equation, you can clearly see the difference in insertion points here.

The guy on the left has very high insertion points, and the guy on the right has very low ones.

This reduces the muscle mass potential for the guy with a smaller "muscle belly." The muscle belly is basically the muscle fibres of the group that can grow and hypertrophy. You can't grow the tendons. You only strengthen them.

This is just one example, but the same goes for any muscle group. Where they originate and insert will be completely individual to that person.



You don't need to know the specifics so, in summary, the origin is where the muscle starts, and the insertion is where it ends.

Everybody has different points, lengths, and breadths of these attachments meaning the shape of your muscle will be different to the next person, even if you do the exact same workout with exact same reps, sets, weight, technique, etc.

If you look at the best physiques in the world, it's usually their genetics that got them there.

It’s taken for granted that they work hard, eat properly, recover well, etc. Genetics pre-determine how someone will look when at their peak potential.

Now onto the important part and how you should approach this.

Use a growth mind-set.

You can be the best YOU can be. You shouldn’t compare yourself to the person beside you.

You will have genetic freaks with perfect insertion points and muscle bellies. They’ll train a little bit and literally inflate like a balloon.

Others will have really bad insertion points and will train twice as hard and not look half as good.

That’s life.

You can maximise your genetics, but you can’t change them.

Use this guide to be the best you can be. Keep your head down, your drive and work ethic up, and you can’t really ask for more.

Now that you understand your genetics are YOUR body, we can speak about realistic goal setting in the next chapter.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Genetics are pre-determined by your DNA you can’t change the shape of your muscle.
- You can maximise what you have, but you won’t look the same as someone with different shaped muscles.
- You have a unique body and so does everyone else, often the top physiques in the world are the lucky ones with good genetics, they don’t necessarily work harder than anyone else.

GOAL SETTING

“If you don’t set goals, how can you score?”

In my opinion, you should set an unachievable goal and “fail forward” instead of succeeding at a mediocre goal.

Setting easy goals is a fast track to being average.

We only grow when we are stretched. This means that we have to aim a lot higher than where we currently are.

Whether that is a financial target, going from £30,000 income per year to £33,000. Or running a marathon instead of a 10k, you have to try, and progress.

With anything in life, the harder it is to do, the less people do it.

Unfortunately, people set goals that are just crazy.

It would be like (in the example above) going from £30,000 per year to £60,000 in 12- months, and not changing their habits, and daily actions to achieve this goal.

That’s where realistic and SMART goal setting comes in.

I’m not saying doubling your income isn’t a good goal, it would definitely stretch you to make you work for it.

It’s just that, along the way, there are lots of other goals you could celebrate — an extra £5,000 per year, or the same yearly income working 5- less hours per week.

It’s a case of being realistic.

Let’s make it relevant.

If you have 25% body fat and want to get under 10% that could take a long time — about 15-20 weeks.

That is tiring just thinking about all the work needed.

A lot of training success is based upon your consistent persistence.

Showing up 1 day after the other and making sure that happens.

The only way to make sure you get there is to make your goals SMART. This stands for.

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-sensitive.

I’ll give you an example here. Let’s say we’re talking about losing 10 lbs in 10 weeks. Is this a S.M.A.R.T goal?

Specificity – Losing 10 lbs of fat.

Measurable – You can get tested by most gyms or Personal Trainers. Also, there are lots of other variables you can track.

Achievable – Healthy weight loss is 1-2 lbs per week, and this puts you at the bottom end of this, allowing for some wiggle room.

Relevant – The action steps to this goal are especially relevant and will get you closer to it.

Time-restricted – 10 weeks sets a deadline. If you measure every week, you’ll know if you’re on target, and If not on target, you make changes to do so.

A little extra on goal setting, you may not have heard about this before, but it is more important than setting the goal itself.

It’s your reason WHY to do the goal, not what the goal actually is.

Think about it, everyone who’s fat knows what they have to do, but if their why isn’t big enough, they’ll give up at the first hurdle.

Your WHY has to be bigger than you.

If you had kids and your obesity created a risk of you getting a heart attack and leaving your kids without a parent, you would have a pretty big WHY.

If you had a fitness competition where hundreds of people are watching, and photos will capture your physique, you won’t want to look fat. That’s a pretty big WHY, excuses start to disappear, and you just do what it takes.

My best advice is to make set small, medium, and long-term goals and make them have a purpose, by that, I mean something bigger than you.

Something like motivating and inspiring people to change their life by taking control of their health.

That’s a pretty big WHY.

Losing body fat for vanity will quickly get boring, and you won't be able to keep it off.

Make sure your WHY is big enough, set smart goals, and you will grow.

Ultimately, growth is progress and happiness.

Denzel Washington said it best “be happy, but never satisfied.”

Know that goal setting gets you somewhere, but when you get there, be happy, take a break, set new goals, and keep progressing.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Goals are there to stretch you and make you grow.
- Set S.M.A.R.T goals to keep motivation high.
- Be happy bunt never satisfied, have a growth mind-set.

PROGRESS AND CONSISTENCY

In a world of Instafamous and Facebook likes, we are sold the dream of the perfect program.

The six-week six-pack secrets.

It sounds sexy, and if they've done a good job, you believe them and give away your money.

I get it, I've been there, and looking for the one program that will get you the results you've always wanted.

It has the answer and the results you've been missing.

Well, here's what really matters, BEING CONSISTENT.

I could give you the best program in the world, and if you don't do it, it's useless.

In another scenario, I could give you a bad program that you give everything you've got to, and you would see much better results than this unicorn dream program you had before.

Here's the issue with this part, it doesn't sell.

Everyone wants the magic pill, the solution.

Boxing up "*work hard, sleep well, train harder than you think you have to, longer than you think you need to, eat well every day, manage your stress and be happy*" wouldn't sell much on the internet.

The best thing you can do in the next year would be to show up and do something small to progress inside and/or outside the gym EVERY DAY.

Not just Monday to Friday, no weekends off.

Every day is an opportunity to grow and get better, or, go backwards.

It really is a simple concept, yet at the same time, very difficult to do in practice.

Simple can also be difficult, think about that for a moment.

Everyone can have a good meal.

Everyone can have an amazing workout.

Everyone can have a good night's sleep.

The hard and difficult part is doing this for as many days as possible.

If you think you might be able to train 5- days, train 4 and have a bonus 5th day.

If you think you might be able to train 4- days, train 3 and have a bonus 4th day

The best progress you will make is sustainable progress.

12-week transformations are few and far between. The people that keep the results they got is even less.

With this plan I'll give you, you will be able to use all the information in this eBook to continue getting results for years to come.

You shouldn't need to buy another program again if you apply the principles in here.

It's all about sustainable change.

Small actions that you can confidently repeat over time.

Not that the hard-core 12-week transformation mentality is bad, it's just VERY difficult to sustain and keep it going.

If you were to progress 1 rep or (1kg) on a lift per week, you would be in a much better position in 12 months than the person trying to break PB's every week.

Think about it, if you put 5kg on the bar and you feel good, you'll get the PB you're after. How long can you keep that up for before hitting a plateau or even going backward?

If you were to do the 1 rep or the (1kg) per week method, you would be able to recover from it, and in 1 year, you will be 52kg better off or 52 reps.

This includes holidays, birthdays, parties, having a social life.

That's why simple is very difficult. People pause progress because of life events, but progress is made when you show up day in day out, week in week out.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Slower progress is better than fast progress.
- Be consistent, weekends and holidays are often where results are won and lost.
- Find something you can stick to instead of the perfect program that's unrealistic.

ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

This chapter is probably the most important in this book as it gives you the rules you need to stick to for long term progress.

There's no point on focusing on time under tension if you can't lift any kind of weight.

It's just like building a skyscraper without spending the developing stages digging out and laying the foundations.

Most novices focus on what the best in the world are doing.

The things that got the best in the world where they are today, is the fundamental principles of training as well as genetics.

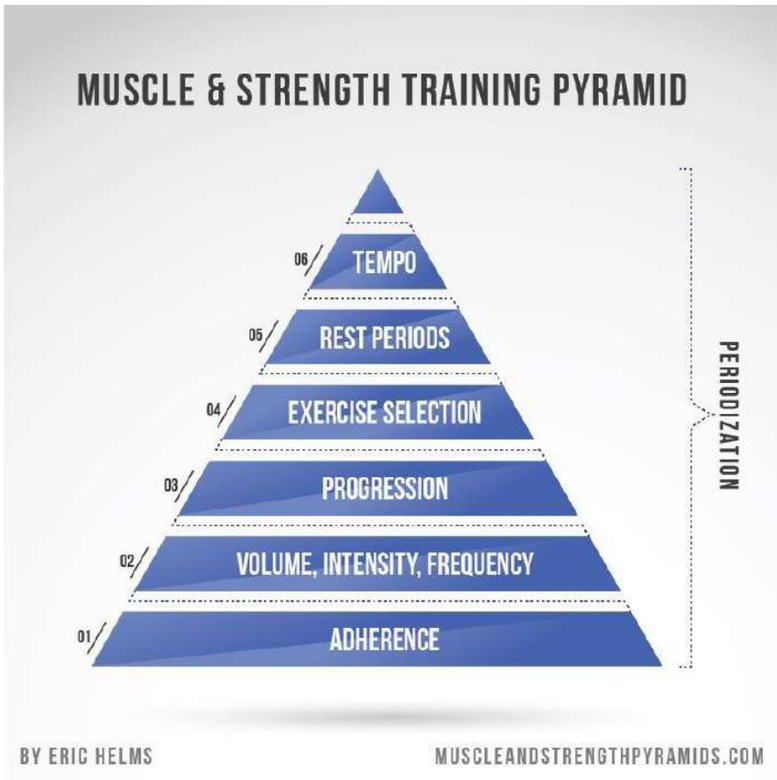
What works for them might not work for you.

Some of what they show you is completely irrelevant. Their life is solely focused on training, eating, and recovery, so their techniques probably don't apply to you and your training.

The purpose of this eBook is to give YOU the tools YOU need for YOUR goals. As tempting as it is to follow your favourite fitness professionals personal training program, more often than not, you need to sort out your own foundations before you consider this.

Below is a pyramid that shows you what you should be focusing on first. The base of the pyramid is where you spend most of your energy mastering, and then each level up is the next focus.

You don't focus on the top until the bottom layers are sorted,



Really, this pyramid should be your training bible. If you take anything from this eBook, take this order of importance as gospel.

Don't take my word for it. It was created by Eric Helms, part of an elite team of natural bodybuilding coaches. He has devoted his life to research, the training principles of hypertrophy and fat loss as well as nutrition to support this.

You can get a detailed book on this at www.muscleandstrengthpyramids.com

If you're looking to further your knowledge of your own training and nutrition, then get this. It goes a little bit more into the science and can get geeky at times, but it's needed to understand how to make progress over time.

Now that part is done, let's look back at the pyramid. I've touched on this already in the previous section, but the most important factor over anything else is to adherence.

This means, can you stick to the program?

If I give you the perfect plan, but you execute it 50-60% of the time, it's not going to be as good as something less optimal that you perform all out, 100% of the time.

Adherence is the key to success, you have to enjoy it at least a little bit, it has to be realistic to stick to, and you have to be consistent, only then will you get anything out of any program.

After this, comes "volume, intensity, frequency."

This is basically the total weight lifted, how hard it is relative to (1 RM), and how often per day/week/month you train the group of muscles or specific movement.

These numbers basically have to be managed so you don't burn out and you can still make progress.

On that note, the next level is progress.

If you add anything to any of these numbers, then you will make progress (providing your technique is good, and your mind-muscle connection is adequate).

If everything at this stage is in place, then you're doing good.

Moving onto exercise selection now, by lifting more total weight on a specific movement, you will make progress. However, if that movement isn't as efficient as it could be or there is a better exercise, then you can be wasting valuable work ethic and energy.

Let's take an isolated biceps curl on a cable that focuses on the "peak."

That's A LOT of energy and focus for not much weight lifted. If you were to execute a good form barbell curl, you would be lifting more weight, and there would be a much better effect on your arms.

Now we get onto rest periods. I'll be giving you guidelines on this but here's the thing, if the rest is so little that you're too tired to lift more weight, you're missing the previous level of progression.

Remember that this pyramid has levels of importance that you shouldn't forget. Don't move on and forget about the previous level, every level relates to the next one.

If you take too little rest and miss out on reps, then you're missing out on progress. Miss out on progress, then what's the point?

Take the following scenarios as examples. The first example there's low rest, and you are pushing to failure. This means you miss reps in the second set and so on.

E.g. 1 –

Set 1 20kg x 12 reps.

Set 2 20kg x 9 reps.

Set 3 20kg x 6 reps.

Total reps at 20kg = 27 reps.

Total volume = 540kg.

E.g. 2 –

Set 1 20kg x 10 reps.

Set 2 20kg x 10 reps.

Set 3 20kg x 10 reps.

Total reps at 20kg = 30 reps.

Total volume = 600kg.

By taking more rest and leaving a rep or 2 "in the tank," you can lift more total volume (level 2 of the pyramid).

That's the benefit of rest. It's ok to be "hardcore" and feel like you are working more, but if your fitness levels don't allow you to recover then take more rest, so the foundations of the pyramid are in still in place.

The last level on the pyramid is tempo.

Tempo is the rep speed. Where the stress is placed on the muscle and how fast you perform it.

As a general rule, a powerlifter tends to have a faster tempo, and a bodybuilder has a slower tempo to create more mechanical stress.

You know the importance of tempo by the tempo section described earlier, if you've forgotten then go back and have a read.

I can't stress enough how simple this needs to be.

These are the basics, and they are what you should always revert to when not making progress and what you should master.

Too often, people major in the minors. They are focusing on the top of the pyramid (tempo) before sorting the bottom (adherence).

In order of importance here's what you should focus on.

1. Adherence – Can you stick to the plan? If not, change it up.
2. Volume, intensity, frequency – Total weight lifted, how heavy, how often. Find something you enjoy, and you can stick to.
3. Progression – How you progress to level 2 of the pyramid.
4. Exercise selection – The specifics of a certain movement for a specific muscle group or sports performance.
5. Rest periods – How long you rest for and how it helps create overload and/or the fatigue needed for progress.
6. Tempo – The rep speed needed to create tension on a muscle.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Stick to the plan. Find a training program that works for you, and you can stick to otherwise find another plan.
- Sort out the basics first before you look to focus on the smaller things.
- Always remember the foundations that got you to where you are, they will never change no matter how much progress you make or think you've made.

PLANNING AHEAD, DEALING WITH SETBACKS AND HOLIDAYS.

It happens, just when everything is going great, everything feels good, food is right, training is good, you're sleeping well, and it's easy to get to the gym.

Then something unplanned happens.

You're stopped in your tracks and training just isn't going well anymore, or it isn't even happening at all.

This is one of the most frustrating things that can happen when training is going well.

It doesn't have to be like that, though.

As we get older, for some reason, we take on more responsibility.

For some it's a tougher career, others it's a family, travel, buying a house, the list goes on.

We only have so much energy to give and "all of a sudden" you're out of shape.

"If you fail to plan, then plan to fail."

When leaving it to chance, the chance will usually win.

It's not luck that people are in great shape, it's a case of priorities.

Now, this doesn't mean the gym is number 1 and family, work, and everything else is a distant 2nd.

It just means you find what works for you and you don't compromise, and why should you?

When you're in shape, you're more confident, more productive, have better feelings of wellbeing, you're physically fitter and stronger, more energetic, you sleep better, you drink less alcohol.

The list is endless, so having that time to yourself that you are striving to be better is a no brainer when it gives back so much to the rest of your life.

All these reasons are why you have to protect your energy and make time for yourself.

If it were as easy as giving you the "perfect plan" then you would just look out the most qualified coach on the internet, download his/her program, get it done, then results follow.

Well, a reality check for you here, life isn't that simple.

You will get side-tracked, you will miss a workout now and then, and you will probably have to take time off.

You might even get injured, although, if you're training within your limits with good technique and control as discussed in previous chapters, your chances of injury are greatly reduced.

Injuries usually happen with lack of control, unpredictable circumstances, and/or poor programming.

I'm here to tell you how to manage these things.

The previous chapter discussed consistency and progress, and if you're injured or can't do workouts, then progress can't happen.

Here are some considerations to help you stay on track.

When on holiday, you want to find places that have an adequate gym. It will rarely be perfect, but something with a bench, some dumbbells and a barbell will do.

People will say you're crazy for training on holiday, but that's their perception, not your reality.

For me (and hopefully you), I love training, it's always on my mind, and I'm here to push myself and get better.

If I'm on holiday, I want to do the things I love and working out is exactly that. I'm not saying your holiday should be centred on training. Part of life and holidays is about trying out new experiences, and that should be what you do.

There's nothing wrong with a training holiday but here's how to manage holiday progress.

- Plan your rest week for when you're away. You can't train 100% all year, when you take a week off full training or plan to back off a little bit, use the holiday as a time to recover.
- Train first thing in the morning before breakfast. This will save you taking valuable time away from the holiday and will allow you to eat breakfast guilt-free. You will maybe be in a surplus on holiday, so this might even help gym performance and muscle gain.
- Bring bands and easy to carry gym equipment that doesn't take up much storage. At worst you'll end up being able to do a band workout in your room

Let's talk about injuries and sickness.

They happen, as simple as that, even if you're doing everything right, correct programming, enough sleep, good nutrition, plenty of stretching, etc., something will happen.

It's not guaranteed, but if you're consistently training hard enough to make progress in the gym, chances are you'll get injured or sick at some stage in your life.

It's obviously not ideal and no one likes being out of action for any period but let's reframe it.

When you get an injury, it's a sign, that something is, or something went wrong, as simple as that. If you're training correctly under control, then you shouldn't get injured, but when it does happen it could be any number of the following things;

- Dehydration
- Bad technique
- Too heavyweight
- Moving too fast
- Poor sleep
- Stress
- Lack of proper stretching/recovery
- Poor nutrition
- Lack of focus
- Bad exercise selection
- Overreaching or overtraining

The list goes on, your job is to recognise what happened and try to figure out why it happened. If it's something obvious, address it. Often, it's something within our control.

Sometimes though, it can't be helped. If you're consistently pushing your limits, somethings got to give, you can't make progress forever.

Every top athlete or bodybuilder has had something they've had to overcome, in some cases, even torn muscles of bones.

The same goes for sickness. If you're stressing your body to its limits regularly, then you run the risk of a compromised immune system. If you're missing out on vegetables, sleep, recovery, and/or other things, then you increase the likelihood of injuries and sickness.

If it happens, it happens. You can go full-on man flu, or you can suck it up.

Either is fine as you have to adapt regardless. The worst thing you can do is to try and push through 100%.

Often if you feel something tight or sore, a day rest will sort it if you look after it.

Here are some general rules for you to stick to if you feel something coming up.

1. If you feel the wrong kind of pain (sharp, not muscle-burning) during an exercise, stop and move on.

Better to miss some volume on that workout than to be out for weeks for being “hard-core.” Progress is long term, not being tough through an exercise. Stretch the muscle, focus time on relaxing and figuring out why you got the pain in the first place

2. If you’re feeling properly sick, ask yourself if you need to do that workout. I’m not saying to avoid the gym anytime you get a runny nose but be aware of how sick you are. 1-2 day’s rest will allow you to recover. Focus on sleep, high-quality nutrition with plenty of vegs and hit it hard when you’re ready. If not, go in and get the blood moving, sometimes doing what you planned but with lighter weights can help you focus on good quality movements.

Like I said, sickness and injuries are normal. It’s how we deal with them that makes us better.

Often, they can be avoided.

Pain, stiffness, and sickness is your body telling you that something is wrong and has to be addressed. If you’re smart and are aware of your body, you will catch these things before they get out of hand. Many times, I’ve injured myself because I’ve either had a bad night’s sleep, ignored the gradual fatigue or tiredness building up or technique hasn’t been good.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- Sickness and injuries can be a good thing, catch them early and don’t push through when one day of rest can make a huge difference.
- Plan ahead, get sleep, warm-up, practice good technique, and push when you feel good.
- Injuries and sickness happen. If you ever have to take time off, use that time to reflect and just relax.

MYTH BUSTING

MEAL FREQUENCY

Lots of meals speeds up metabolism.

This is the biggest myth you'll hear.

It makes no difference how many meals you have per day (within reason) for your metabolism.

There are people out there in amazing shape, and they only eat 1-2 meals per day.

Others eat 6-7 meals per day, maybe more.

You have to find what works for you, hit your total calories, protein, carbs, and fats in whatever way you want, and you will get results.

It is literally that simple.

Ideally, you want to have evenly sized protein meals with at least 20-30g of a high leucine content quality protein source. Things like whey protein, meat, eggs, and dairy all have this.

The reason for this is that quality protein with high leucine content stimulates muscle protein synthesis maximally, this is the art of building muscle. (3), (4), (5)

YOU HAVE TO TRAIN ABS TO SEE THEM

It amazes me how many people do abs when they are 20%+ body fat.

Doing sit-ups or "crunches" is a waste of time, they are usually performed wrongly and contribute to bad posture.

If you are fat, sit-ups aren't the best way to see your six-packs. You will feel them working 100%, but you won't see them until you diet.

It will take roughly 17,500 sit-ups to burn 1 pound of fat, that's a lot of sit-ups.

You can burn calories a lot more effectively than sit-ups, when you get lean enough to see them, you can start to train them.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't train your core for strength and function first, but you should focus your energy on bigger calorie burning activities and creating a calorie deficit through a good diet first.

The last point on this, just like any other muscle group, abs are genetically predetermined. So, if you don't have an eight pack, you can't train to get one. If you have a gap in your abs, you can't close it up.

Like any muscle, you can train them with weights to grow but who wants blocky abs that stick out? If that's you, that's fine, and your goals are your goals so stick to them, just know that your abs will be determined by your genetics and not how many sit-ups you do.

TURNING FAT INTO MUSCLE

Unfortunately, this isn't possible unless you're a complete beginner doing everything perfectly. Even if that's the case, it won't happen the same way you think it will.

To burn fat, you HAVE to be in a calorie deficit. You HAVE to burn more than you eat, whether that is by 1% or 50%, you just have to make the calorie equation promote fat loss. That means calories in must be less than calories out.

The opposite is true for pure muscle gain. You HAVE to eat more calories (the right kind) than you burn. It's as simple as that. You can't put on weight if you aren't giving the body the building blocks it needs to do so.

Think about it this way. If you were laying bricks, building a house. If you lay 1- brick per minute (building muscle) and someone was taking away 2- bricks per minute (a Calorie deficit), how could you build the house? (Your body/muscle). It's physically impossible. The maths and physics don't add up.

So, can you do both at the same time? Most probably not.

You can get stronger while burning fat, but that isn't building new muscle. What is happening there is that your body is becoming more efficient at using what it has. The muscle fibres you have are going from being 10-20% efficient to 40-50%+ efficient. This gives the impression of more muscle.

That will also give you more "tone" and definition as the fibres you do have are getting more conditioned.

If you're "skinny-fat," your primary goal should be to lose fat as quickly as possible and gain as much strength as possible. Remember, strength and muscle are different things?

Strength is how much force each muscle fibre can produce, and muscle is the amount of fibres you have (bricks).

When you are too fat, it's harder to build good quality muscle without putting on too much extra "fluff." It can happen, but when you diet down again and have too much fat to lose, you risk losing all the new muscle you have gained. When you diet down the main goal is to reduce how much muscle you lose. (You will lose muscle if you're not on steroids, it's a scientific fact) (6) (7).

So, to summarise, you can't lose fat AND build muscle at the same time, but you can lose fat and gain strength, which will help you to build more muscle moving forwards.

Have a goal, fat loss, or muscle gain. When losing fat, stay as strong as possible to minimise muscle loss, and make sure the deficit isn't extreme. The longer, the better to preserve muscle mass.

The same goes for building muscle. Be sure to lift heavy enough, with enough volume to stimulate muscle growth but don't have too much of a surplus that you will put on too much fat.

MORE PROTEIN IS BETTER FOR MUSCLE GAIN

Protein is needed for muscle gain.

Some are good, and more isn't necessarily better.

Muscle is constructed form the amino acids broken down from protein.

So, the theory goes that if you eat more protein, you're going to get more muscle.

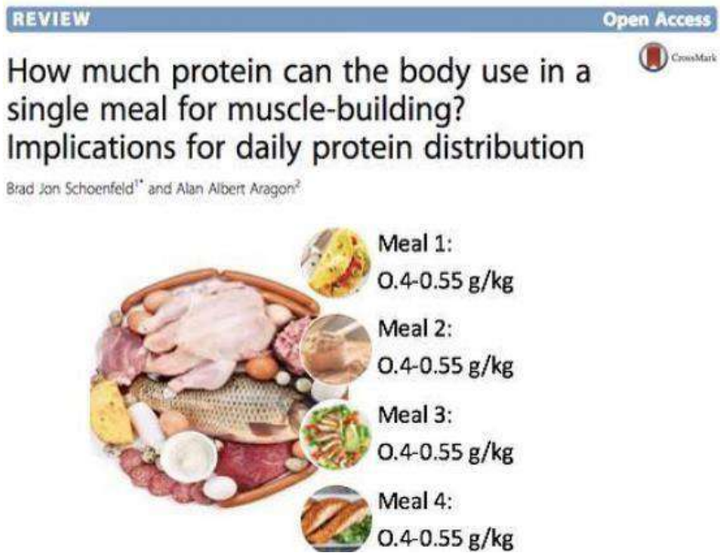
Just like the leucine threshold I described in the meal frequency section, some is good, too much leads to diminishing returns.

Guidelines start as low as 0.8 grams of protein per kg of body weight, up to 3.1 grams of protein per kg of lean body weight. (8), (9).

It has been shown that after 20-40 grams of protein per serving (depending on body weight), the benefits wear off. This means that 30 grams are much better than 15 grams, but 60 grams is only marginally better than 30 grams. (18).

The best way to go about hitting your protein is to split it up as evenly as possible throughout the day to suit your schedule and lifestyle.

I would aim for four servings of protein split up evenly. You can go up to 8 "meals" per day.



Anything more than a certain amount is only going to be oxidized for energy. (19) That's why it's best to split up your protein into regular feedings. Guidelines in the picture above are quite solid.

The thing with protein is that you want enough, but not too much.

If you are dieting and are going to eat anything much, then protein is the one to do it on as you will find it harder to store fat by doing so. (Harder, not impossible). Protein has a high TEF (thermal effect of food), meaning it takes calories to actually use it.

Check the reference guidelines for your goals to set your intake. (More on the nutrition section). My advice is to stick to anything between 1.5g per kg to 2.2g per kg unless you are extremely lean and extremely muscled.

You want to save other calories from carbs and fats to use for energy, so you can actually train hard. Having too many calories from protein means you are missing out on your body's primary energy source for intense exercise, carbs.

Low carb and low fat will leave you feeling terrible. Pick something moderate and use the remaining of your Calorie allowance to suit your preference.

Unless you are a steroid user, you don't need that high protein. It's different for steroid users as they have super physiological levels of protein turnover, meaning that they can actually use more protein than a natural weight lifter. For the purpose of this book, we will stick to natural athletes.

See the scale below to get an idea of where you need to be.

EATING FRUIT MAKES YOU FAT

CARBS MAKE YOU FAT – CARBS AFTER 6 MAKE YOU FAT

I had to put all of these together as the answer is the same. Too many calories make you fat, none of the above do on their own.

Eating fruit is good for you, it comes with fibre, water, vitamins, and minerals as well as digestive enzymes, so if anything, and the fruit will help fat loss. Eating too much fruit that puts you in a Calorie surplus will make you fat, not the fruit on its own.

Carbs are your brains primary energy source. They get used for intense exercise and are the most efficient way for your body to produce energy. If you eat "healthy" carbs, they often come with fibre and key nutrients too. The same as above, if you eat too many carbs, putting you above your Calorie needs, you will get fat, not the carbs on their own.

Carb timing can be beneficial, but only if you're an elite level athlete. The only reason they will make you fat by eating them after 6 pm is that you have eaten too much during the day, and your total daily calorie intake is too high. See the pattern here? The science says that it doesn't matter what time you eat, if Calories are below maintenance, you WILL lose fat.

It all boils down to your Calorie equation, your energy balance. If you eat less than you burn, you'll lose weight.

Look at the diagram below. Timing is the second last thing you should be worried about.

(14)

The only reason certain foods are bad for you is because they are highly palatable. This means they're easier to overeat and you will want to eat a lot more of them. Things like bread on their own aren't bad, and they just make you want to eat more or are easy to over-consume the Calories.

If you match your Calories then, any of the following; carbs, fats, sugar, meal timing, cake…. won't make you fat. You get the idea. (10)

FAT BURNERS WORK

Ok, by now I hope you're starting to consider critical thinking. (Evidence, non-opinion-based thinking.)

Rarely is there a black or white answer to a question in this industry, usually, it is "it depends."

Evidence-based fat burners work, HOWEVER only as an addition to a calorie-controlled diet. Just check the nutrition pyramid above.

Fat burners are a supplement, and they are useless if you aren't eating fewer Calories than you're burning, they just won't work. You will literally be throwing your money down the toilet if you are eating too much.

The perfect example is people who kill it during the week with cardio, weights, perfect diet and supplements but only then go on to forget the hard work they've done and had a cheat day/weekend.

This cancels out any hard work they've done.

It's easy to overeat 3,500 Calories. It takes time to cut that from your diet to burn fat.

You can't exactly eat negative 3,500 Calories in a day, it's not healthy, and you'll be chasing your tail.

That's why consistency works, and only then should you consider fat burners.

When I say consistency, I'm talking 6-12 weeks of a deficit with planned overfeeding or maintenance periods of Calories.

Only then should you consider fat burners.

I'll elaborate on fat burners in the supplements section of this book with appropriate references below.

WEIGHT TRAINING BAD FOR YOUR JOINTS

This is an all-out lie.

Like I said in the section above, and the same with any good question, "it depends."

If you weren't flexible, and I made you do the splits, you would probably hurt yourself.

The same goes for weight training. If I was to put 200 kg's on your back and you hadn't ever squatted before or conditioned your body to that movement or those loads, then it would be terrible for you.

Just like anything, it is completely dependent on the situation.

Your body can adapt, and it is pretty bulletproof if you look after it.

The injury rate of elite and competitive bodybuilders as well as athletes who weight train is actually less than 0.1%. (11), (12)

Basically, as long as you control the environment, perform the proper technique, and lift within your limits, then injury rates are pretty low.

The issue with sports and injuries is that the nature of them is reactive, they require quick, unplanned movements.

When in the gym, you can control how much weight you lift, how fast you lift it, and your range of motion.

Simply put, weight training won't harm you when performed correctly, within your limits. If it does, you've either lost concentration, you're too tired (a combination of many factors), and you are lifting too heavy or with bad technique.

Weight training actually has a host of long-term benefits.

Increased bone density (reduced chance of osteoporosis, brittle bone disease), stronger muscles, tendons and joints, increased general strength, lower body fat. The list goes on.

You're not reading this eBook because you need convincing, so I'll leave it there. If you want more research about this, just email me at fabio@fabiobonanno.coach, and I'll send you more stuff.

How are the following diets successful in fat loss?

- Ketogenic
- Paleo
- Low carb
- Low fat
- Atkins
- Shake/juice diet
- Vegan/vegetarian
- Intermittent fasting
- Chicken and broccoli
- Many others

They are all effective in some way or another at creating a Calorie deficit.

There are several ways you can get in shape, whether you want to call it something, whether you want to eat the bro diet of eating chicken, broccoli and rice 5-8 times per day, the only way they work is they help you create a calorie deficit.

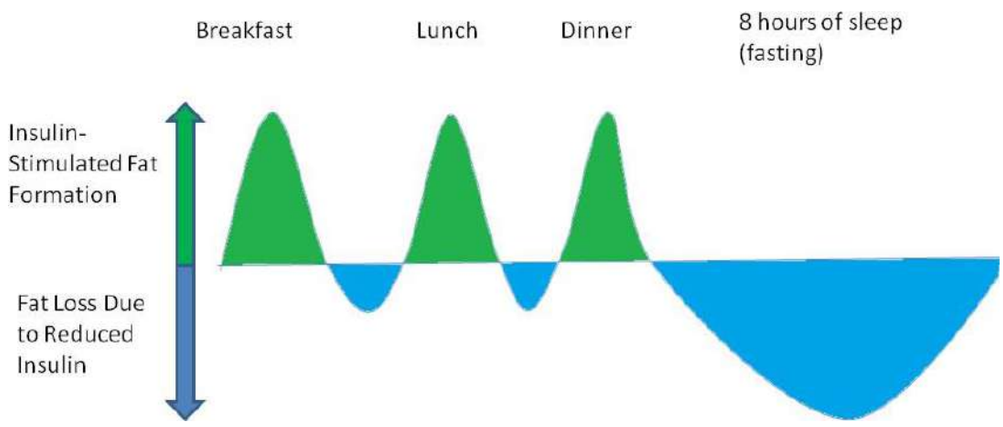
They aren't magic they don't have special fat-burning qualities.

If you eat less than you burn, you will lose weight, and it's as simple as that. (10)

How you set up that diet for success is completely up to you.

You either need to burn more calories to create a bigger deficit or eat less Calories for the same outcome.

Look at the graph below



This shows three typical meals during the day.

When you eat food, your body needs to do something with it, it either stores it (as fat or inside the muscle if you have created a demand by training with weights) or uses it as energy.

In the graph above, the body is "storing" 3 times for the day (green part). However, it has three fat-burning portions for the day (blue part). As a general rule, if the blue part is more than the green, then you're going to burn more fat unless you have some other issues that go beyond the scope of this eBook.

The bigger the green spike, the more exercise or activity you have to do to counteract this.

So, a successful fat loss protocol will involve a combination of a good diet you can stick to and a good exercise plan you can stick to.

That's it. Nothing fancy, if you have the worst diet that you believe in 100% and apply yourself to, along with a bad workout plan, which you give everything to, it will work. It might not be the best approach, but it will work.

The opposite goes for a perfect diet you cheat on and a perfect workout plan you miss reps on. This won't create a calorie deficit, and you won't get fat loss results.

You need to find a way to create this deficit that suits you and your life.

However, you do that is up to you, but here are some considerations.

1. Ensure enough protein to maintain as much muscle mass as possible. Less muscle will make it harder to lose fat. See the next section for protein guidelines.
2. Ensure you are in a calorie deficit. I can't emphasise this enough. If you're not losing fat, you're not in a Calorie deficit, simple as that. This means you will probably have to count your Calories at some point. Always be objective instead of subjective. "I'm eating healthy" is subjective. "I'm eating 200 grams of protein, 150 grams of carbs and 60 grams of fats" is specific and objective. A sprinkle of olive oil on your salad is subjective, 15ml of olive oil is specific, and you know that's around 135 Calories.
3. It's probably best to get enough vegetables and fruit in your diet for satiety and long-term success. I explained earlier that fruit isn't bad for you. If you eat less calories than you're burning and also eat no nutrients (vitamins and minerals), you will start to feel terrible very quickly. Technically you can lose fat without eating vegetables, but it won't last long. You'll create nutrient deficiencies, and energy will be a lot lower than it needs to be. Aim for 8-10 portions of vegetables and fruit per day, and you read that right, 8-10.
4. Pick a diet that works for you. Don't aim to eat six times per day if you're in meetings all day. Adherence is key. If you can only eat three times per day, that's fine, just make sure those three meals are perfect. If a diet fails you, it's not a bad diet, and it's just not good for your current lifestyle.
5. Move more. If you're not losing fat, eat less or move more. Walk more steps (aim for at least 10,000 steps per day, smartphones and fitness watches track these for you). If you sit down all day, there's no blood flow, which means no fat loss. Move more.
6. Weight train. This is a no brainer, and you've already bought in if you're reading this. Your body doesn't want to keep muscle when it's dieting, muscle costs energy to have so your body will try and get rid of that as well as fat, so it can consume less Calories and survive. By weight training, you are keeping a healthy metabolism, and this will allow you to eat more food and lose weight. No weight training or big energy output and you will have to eat even less, which will leave you open to being hungry as well as nutrient deficient.

Fat loss can be complex, but it doesn't have to be. The easier you make it, the more likely you will succeed. Do the least amount of work at the start to get you the most results. If you are in a rush, you will lose a lot of muscle, and you will cut too many Calories and do too much cardio. If that happens, you will have nowhere to go with regards to fat loss.

Stick to the basics first then go from there.

CREATING A DIET. FAT LOSS, MUSCLE GAIN, MAINTENANCE.

Now we are getting onto the specifics for your goals. This can get complicated so there's going to be a good bit of information for you to review here.

This section is going to outline the basics and essentials needed for nutrition to support weight loss, muscle gain, or to keep you at maintenance.

Here's the thing though, you will have to experiment and find out what works for you. This is only going to be a starting point.

One diet that works for you now might not work for you in a few months, or a few years.

Your training will change, your health will change, your body will change.

The key is to know what you're doing and why you're doing it, only then will you be truly in control of your results.

You'll get a starting point, and then I want you to test and assess what worked, and what didn't.

Firstly, let's talk about Calories.

Calories matter.

If you're eating less than you burn, you'll lose weight.

If you're eating the same as you burn, you'll maintain weight.

If you're eating more than you burn, you'll put on weight.

That's the simple version.

Setting up your diet for success should (in my opinion) have the following things and principles in common.

- It should suit your lifestyle and be sustainable
- It should address your goal (surplus, maintenance or deficit/fat loss)
- It should mostly be healthy, whole foods.
- It should be flexible (for travel and life events etc.)
- It should be enjoyable (if you're on fat loss, you will feel like you want more)
- It should have adequate protein for your training demands (the more you weight train, the more you will need)

For the sake of this eBook, we want to positively influence the body composition, so weight training is going to be a big part of this.

You could eat very little and lose weight, but if protein isn't adequate and you don't weight train, you'll lose lots of muscle, and your metabolism will go downhill very fast.

You have to stick to the principles outlined above to succeed in the long run. If you have to come back to different diets because of whatever has happened in your life, then that method of eating is wrong for you in the long term.

You should have figured out by now that there is no 1 diet that is magically going to get you the results you want. If it existed, then it would be used by millions of people to get in shape.

The simple answer is that no diet will ever work for everyone.

That's why I'm not going to tell you what to eat and when to eat it.

You should follow general rules for a successful diet, but you don't have to be a slave to it.

Think of it as good, better, best.

Good is hitting your protein carb and fat targets however you want.

Better is hitting these targets in evenly spread Calorie meals throughout the day.

Best is sticking to a specific meal plan with perfect foods every meal.

You want to start from good and work towards the best.

But let me ask you this, in your adult working life, full of responsibilities and commitments, how often do you have a week that everything is perfect and falls into place?

Not often, right?

You have to adapt to succeed, and that's what a successful diet has to do.

I'll give you specific calculations as a STARTING POINT for your initial nutrition plan. After this, you measure yourself, test, assess, and adapt.

Any nutrition calculation is just a starting point as your body isn't made up of numbers. It's biology. Everyone has different activity levels, different metabolism, and different demands.

So below are recommendations to follow for each goal and how to adapt.

You firstly have to figure out what your maintenance Calories are, and the following calculation should get you most of the way there.

QUICK CALCULATION

Rapid fat loss – 10-12 Calories per pound of bodyweight

Steady, more sustainable fat loss – 12-14 Calories per pound of bodyweight

Maintenance – 14-16 Calories per pound of bodyweight.

Surplus – 16-18 Calories per pound of bodyweight.

Now, these are a very quick starting point to get you going.

In general, the more muscle you have and less body fat you have, you should start at the higher end. If you're carrying, more fat, less muscle and if you're female, start at the lower end of the range. The reason for this is that muscle basically creates your metabolism it costs energy to have. Fat is just a dead weight, so you need less Calories to maintain a fatter, less muscled body than a muscled, lean body.

Another point is how active your job or daily activity is. If you're sitting down all day, aim low. If you're highly active, aim high.

Remember these are just guidelines. You might have to go less or more than the Calories given to get to your goal.

MORE ACCURATE CALCULATION

This will calculate what's called your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) to get your Calories needed at rest without doing any activity. What follows is your activity multiplier to get the total calories your body will burn (on average) for any given day. From there, depending on your goal, you adjust Calories to accommodate. Once you have this number, then you weight yourself, measure and adjust as needed.

For men use the following

BMR= 88.362 + (13.397 x weight in kg) + (4.799 x height in cm) – (5.677 x age in years

For women use the following

BMR = 447.593 + (9.247 x weight in kg) + (3.098 x height in cm) – (4.330 x age in years)

Now, below are activity guidelines to multiply the number you get above to get your total daily calorie expenditure

- Sedentary (little or no exercise) = BMR x 1.2
- Lightly active (light exercise/sports 1-3 days per week) = BMR x 1.375
- Moderately active (moderate exercise/sports 3-5 days per week) = BMR x 1.55)
- Very Active (hard exercise/sports 6-7 days per week) = BMR x 1.725
- Extra active (very hard exercise/sports & physical job or 2 x day training) = BMR x 1.9

WEIGHT MAINTENANCE. Now you have your TDEE (Total Daily Energy Expenditure).

This calculation will get you fairly close to what your body needs to maintain weight. Just remember that your body isn't these mathematical numbers. It's biological, and everyone will have their own metabolism depending on previous nutritional and exercise habits. This calculation will be a "best guess."

If you've always guessed, then this might be new to you, but if you really want to make progress, then you have to get serious about measuring. *Weigh yourself every day in the morning on an empty stomach after going to the toilet.* Through the week your weight will fluctuate, and that's normal. You take the average for the week and decide whether Calories are correct from there. Adjust based on objective numbers instead of changing because you think you should. More on realistic weight loss and gain later.

Now onto more specific goals. The calculation above gives you your maintenance Calories if you want to stay at the same average weight.

If you want to lose weight, you have to burn more than you eat or eat less than you burn — either way, you need to create a calorie deficit. You can just cut any Calories, but later I'll explain the benefits of cutting specific types of Calories from macronutrients. Not all calories are created equal.

The reverse is true for weight gain, and you have to eat more than you burn. If you train hard and create the right stimulus, most of the weight gain should be lean body mass with minimal fat gain. Again, more on this later.

FAT LOSS

The primary and most important rule is to create a calorie deficit.

How you do that is up to you, you can burn more calories through activity and exercise. This would, in theory, increase your TDEE, but if you eat the same, then it would create a deficit. This deficit would then make you burn fat if you trained in the right way, which you will be.

The second way is to eat less, but I like to see this as a last resort. Less Calories means you hungrier more often and have less opportunity to get in good nutrients in your diet, which is also key to long term success. You will have to cut Calories more and more the deeper you are into your "diet" but keep them as high as possible as long as possible.

By keeping them high, you keep the chances of getting more nutrients in high, which is just as important, if not more important. You can lose fat without eating vegetables, but you wouldn't want to as you'd feel pretty bad pretty quickly.

The golden rule that circulates the internet is you should cut 500 Calories from maintenance, and that will make you lose 1lb of fat per week. The theory behind this is that 1lb of fat is 3,500 Calories. This calculation is based on the number of Calories that it takes to store and/or burn 1lb of fat.

There is an issue with this, though. If you are a small inactive female that needs 1500 Calories just to maintain her weight, then taking 500 Calories away from her daily total will be 1/3 of her intake. This is pretty massive.

What you choose to cut is up to you; it is goal dependent. If you want to lose weight fast, then make a BIG cut but be sure to have an exit plan. Otherwise you could binge hard and quickly find yourself fat again. People often neglect the exit plan and ruin all their hard work, quickly putting on what they took so long to lose.

If you're looking to maintain weight loss over a long period, then it should be as small a deficit you can get away with while still losing fat. This means creating a 10-20% deficit and/or increasing Calorie output similarly and going from there.

For example, if your maintenance Calories calculated as your TDEE are 2,000, then you would look to cut 200-400 Calories from that total (10-20%). This would give you a total of 1,800 or 1,600 daily Calories.

Like I said at the start of this diet chapter, it will only be a starting point. Calorie cuts will have a different effect on everyone. Some people might feel terrible cutting too many Calories; others might feel ok. It's up to you to figure out what is best.

You have to take measurements on a weekly basis and go from there. I've seen people consistently lose weight over eight weeks without changing Calories. Others, we've had to make changes every 1-2 weeks.

Aim to lose 1-2% of your body weight per week when on a fat loss phase as a guideline. Remember though, these will be guidelines, your body is biology and not just numbers calculated on paper. Due to increases in lean body mass and strength, combined with fat loss, sometimes you can increase weight and lose fat. This is the Holy Grail, but genetically, we are all different, so it's not as straight forward as having the numbers and following them blindly. You have to assess if what you are doing is working.

Adjustments should be made every 1-2 weeks IF they are required.

MUSCLE GAIN

Now we get onto gaining. Just like losing weight, you will have to track progress and see how you are doing as the weeks go on.

Before I start, I'd like to give you some guidelines on what you can gain as a natural athlete. You can gain more if you're taking anabolic steroids, but that's not what this eBook is about.

A LOT of people think that when they find a new program, they will get the best results they have ever had. I'm not here to burst that bubble. If you learn and apply everything you read in this eBook, I'm VERY confident that you will be highly efficient in your own training. If you have had mediocre results before now, then this could be the time that it all changes for you.

Here's the thing though, it takes time, and it won't be easy. As I write this, I've been lifting weights in some form or another for 18 years. I'm still learning new things every week. I hope in another 18 years that I am in the same situation, just further ahead.

You're going to miss the points I've made; you're going to misread some points or not fully understand the concept or theory. Your brain will be full of other commitments in life, and you'll go through the motions some workouts, completely forgetting everything you've learned. I even do it sometimes, I go through the motions, and there's no mind muscle connection. You have to be focused.

It's even more important when trying to build serious muscle mass.

Every gram of lean tissue (muscle mass) will have to be earned. The smarter AND harder you train will ensure you truly create an environment for growth. The gym stimulates and breaks down muscle. With a properly set up diet, you will give your body the best chance to grow.

The specifics of your diet are key here. Too little and you won't recover, too much and you will put on too much body fat, putting you at risk of losing it all when you're dieting in a catabolic state.

The following table is a guide of realistic expectations depending on your training age. And this is only true if you're training correctly. It's not a case of just showing up in the gym and expecting magic things to happen.

Years of proper training	Potential rate of muscle gain per year
1	20-25 lbs (2 lbs per month)
2	10-12 lbs (1 lb per month)
3	5-6 lbs (0.5 per month)
4+	2-3 lbs (not worth mentioning)

So, if you've been training for a while now don't expect this program to give you miracle results, you've missed the boat there. Does that mean you can't maximise what you're doing now? Of course not. You can definitely increase the quality of your muscle even if you don't increase the actual amount you have.

Some people believe that a huge surplus is needed, and you just train as hard as you can, and you'll diet the fat off. Unfortunately, it's not as easy as that. If you have a massive amount of fat to lose, the chances are that when you're in a deficit, you'll lose a good bit of muscle. Like I said earlier, the leaner you can stay on a "bulk" phase, the better. This doesn't mean you should hold onto stage condition, or even have abs. Just don't let it get out of control.

You need to have more than what your body needs.

Have a surplus of energy for it to use to train AND recover.

This will come in the form of carbs for energy and storage of energy, protein for repair of muscle tissue and fats for vital functions and hormones.

It's up to you what approach you want to take and how hard you want to push it.

My recommendations are to start at a 10-20% surplus and go from there. If you don't mind putting on some "fluff", then aim higher. If you want to stay a little leaner, then stick to the lower end of the guidelines.

All you do is take your maintenance Calories and add 10-20% from there.

Let's take a 2,000 Calorie maintenance diet.

That would mean 200-400 extra Calories. (10-20%)

Again, test, don't guess. If you're not progressing on the scale and/or in the gym, then some changes have to be made.

If you started at a 10% surplus, then move to 15-20%. Remember that your maintenance Calories will also increase as your weight increases, as well as your workout volume, so adjust accordingly.

FOOD TYPES AND QUALITY – IIFYM VS. CLEAN EATING.

Now we're starting to specify a little bit. You have your Calorie targets (specifics of carbs, protein, and fat to follow), food quality is where you start to see a bit of a difference in your long-term health and physique.

The issue with naming a "diet" is that it sets you up for failure as you have to operate within the realms of the diet's criteria.

IIFYM is a specific approach that can help minimise this, but it still has its restrictions. IIFYM is setting up your nutrition targets and hitting them as long as you eat a certain amount of fibre, fruit, and vegetables.

For example, you are (80kg) if you work out your total Calories to be 2000 for your goal with the following parameters.

2 grams of protein per kg = 160 grams of protein per day = 640 Calories (1g protein = 4 Calories).

1 gram of fat per kg = 80 grams of fat per day = 720 Calories (1g fat = 9 Calories).

Carbs would be calculated from the rest of the Calories remaining. 2000 – 1360 (640 + 720) = 640.

Total carb Calories = 640. To work out grams, you divide 640 by 4 which equals = 160 grams.

For this example, the daily targets are as follows.

Protein = 160 grams

Carbs = 160 grams

Fats = 80 grams

The IIFYM approach would state that you hit these targets with most (if not all) whole foods while eating at least 4 portions of vegetables and 2-4 pieces of fruit. This should give you enough fibre, as well as digestive enzymes to keep the gut healthy, which is key for long term health, body composition, and energy.

That’s the basics of IIFYM, now onto clean eating.

Clean eating is the old school “bro” method of eating. The chicken, brown rice, and broccoli crew. Now, while all of these foods are good on their own, if that’s all you eat, you are setting yourself up for failure and a nutrition deficiency.

The concept is that you eat from a pre-determined list of foods, usually lean meats, eggs/egg whites, green vegetables, rice, and potatoes. You would eat 5-8 meals per day and adjust more or less volume of food to hit your goal.

This can be very monotonous and set you up for failure.

Science has shown that meal frequency isn’t important for diet success. Adherence is the most important thing, if you can stick to the diet, the chances of success are a lot higher, even if it is less optimal on paper (10).

This is where IIFYM comes into its own. If you were really craving something sweet on the clean eating “bro” diet, you would quickly start to lose your mind. You wouldn’t be allowed anything “dirty” like a biscuit, ice cream or anything like that. My experience and observation of hundreds of clients are that when one cookie is eaten, it’s all or nothing. No holds barred, and the diet is blown by one night or day of overeating, cancelling and sometimes reversing weeks of hard work.

If you were on the IIFYM approach, you would still be aiming to eat similar clean foods, but you would be able to work in a biscuit, cookie (or whatever else you fancy) somewhere. You would add that cookie (or another treat) to your total numbers and the rest of the day’s food would be adjusted to ensure you hit your targets, as well as fruit and veg intake. This would fulfil a craving without blowing out your diet.

In the long run, you would stay on track, even make more progress because you are physically and mentally satiated, and the chances of binging and blowing the diet are greatly reduced.

The deeper you are into a diet and the lower your Calories, the harder this would become, but there’s no reason you can’t fit in some treat foods all the way to your show day, competition or holiday.

To sum up, clean eating versus the flexible dieting approach (IIFYM). Both are good; however, you have to be able to sustain the approach and eating the same foods day in, day out usually sets you up for failure.

The end goal of the approach you choose has to create a Calorie deficit, be adequate in protein (to counteract muscle loss) and it should fulfil your micronutrient needs (vitamins and minerals) as well as fibre.

MACROS – The specifics of your diet.

There are hundreds of websites out there that help you calculate your macros, and most will be fine for what you are after. It's the specific manipulations that you would pay a coach for as they have real-world experience, and hopefully, the research-backed approach also.

As discussed before, your macros are made up of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats (and alcohol, but we won't discuss that in this section).

Each macro has its own Calorie value, and these values are rounded up or down as it is not practical to give the specific value to fractions of a percentage here.

Carbohydrates = 4 Calories per gram

Protein = 4 Calories per gram

Fats = 9 Calories per gram

Alcohol = 7 Calories per gram. (Alcohol doesn't benefit any gym-based goals directly but has to be included for lifestyle purposes)

We have three goals when it comes to body composition.

Fat loss – eating less than you burn.

Weight maintenance – eating the same as you burn.

Muscle gain – eating more than you burn.

That's the basics right there.

Let's recap. In the above section, we calculated your TDEE (total daily energy expenditure). This is your starting point.

FAT LOSS - Take 10-20% or more Calories away from your TDEE. It depends on your goal and how quickly you need to get there. The smaller the deficit, the better as it gives you a chance to keep as much muscle as possible. However, if you are time-restricted, you will have to cut more calories or do more output to create a bigger deficit.

E.g. for 2,000 Calories, you would take away 200-400 Calories from this giving you 1,600-1,800 Calories.

MAINTENANCE – TDEE remains the same.

MUSCLE GAIN – Add 10-20% or more Calories to your TDEE. The issue is that you want to guarantee you're in a surplus, but you don't want to eat so much that you put on too much fat too quickly.

E.g. for 2,000 Calories, you would add 200-400 Calories to this giving you 2,200-2,400 Calories.

With all the calculations given here, you shouldn't set and forget. Test if you're moving in the right direction. Take weekly or bi-weekly average weights and adjust from there.

You now have your total Calories for each goal. How you break it down from there is up to you and personal preference, but protein should be your main "macro" that is fixed. Carbs and fats can be more flexible, depending on your goal.

Remember that the main part of a diet is adherence, not perfection. The greater the chance you have to stick to an approach, the greater the chance of success. Let's take bread as an example. It's been demonised for no reason. The reason people lose weight when they cut out bread is because they create a calorie deficit. This deficit is because bread is somewhat Calorie dense and is easy to overeat. The inclusion of bread actually helps people lose more weight in the long run due to the fact they don't feel as deprived. Check this really interesting research here [(13)]

FAT LOSS MACROS

With fat loss, as you know, you're in a calorie deficit. Your body is eating away at itself, that's the nature of a deficit. It doesn't want to keep muscle as muscle costs energy just to have on your body. Muscle burns more calories, so your body does it's best to get rid of it (after long periods of dieting or more aggressive periods). For this reason, protein should be higher to counteract this.

Muscle is made of protein. It breaks down muscle protein into amino acids when in a bigger/longer deficit. For this reason, protein intake should be higher than when on maintenance or a surplus.

Starting guidelines for fat loss are 1.8g-2.2+ grams of protein per kg body weight, all the way up to 2.7 grams per kg. It's better to play it safe and aim higher in this situation. If you are heavily muscled, then I would go even higher here but not essential. The most you should ever go is 2.7 grams per kg, in my opinion. (The highest guidelines you'll see is 3.2g per kg of fat-free mass, meaning that you would have to calculate your body fat and figure out fat-free mass by taking away your fat weight from the total weight, a bit more complex).

Fat guidelines are usually 15-25% of total Calories. You shouldn't go lower than 10% ever; otherwise, you run the risk of creating hormonal issues.

It's a personal preference where you set your "macros" at — some people like higher carbs, others like lower carbs and higher fats. In my experience, for workout performance, I prefer higher carbs and lower fats where possible. In this program, the main energy source for workouts is carbs, so if you restrict too much, say goodbye to performance and feeling good.

Often people just feel terrible on low carb. However, genetically, we are all different. If you have been brought up on a culture that is predominantly high fat, then cutting out fat will probably make you feel bad. The same goes for high carb cultures, cut out the carbs, and cut out any chance of feeling good.

With any of these guidelines, set your targets, give them time to see if you truly respond positively or not to them, then you can change them. I'd give it at least 2-4 weeks of a certain approach to see if it works for you.

To summarise macros for fat loss, here's an example for an 80kg trainee with maintenance Calories of 2,500

Macronutrients	Protein	Fat	Carbohydrate
	1.8g - 2.7g/kg (0.8 - 1.23g/lb) of bodyweight	15-25% of total calories per day (10% minimum for short periods)	The remaining Calories to fulfil daily requirements.
Example for 2,000 Calorie diet and 80kg trainee. (20% deficit)	2.2g per kg = 176g protein (4 Cals/g x 176g = 704 Cals)	15% of Calories. 2,000 x 15% = 300 Calories =33g fat (300 Cals divided by 9 Cals/g	2,000 – (704 + 300) = 996 Calories = 249g carbs (996 Cals divided by 4 Cals/gram)

The above is just an example, and you can change the values going from left to right and adjust the other numbers from there.

MAINTENANCE MACROS

Now you have a bit more of a buffer as Calories are slightly increased. Due to the fact you aren't in a deficit, you won't need as much protein in the diet. Protein is still important, and you just don't need to push it as high as you would when in a deficit as your body is getting enough calories.

If protein is lower as well as the Calories being higher, then this means you have more to play with when it comes to setting ups your fat targets and carb targets. Protein won't need to go above 2.2 grams per kg, but you can go as low as 1.4 grams per kg. I tend to aim somewhere in the middle.

The rest is very similar to fat loss macros. Depending on your preference and satiety from carbs, you might want to go higher fats. For body composition goals and performance in the weight room, I would tend to favour more carb, so don't go too high on fats if it's not needed. Some days you can have fats at the high end of the scale if you like, just to see how it makes you feel. Adjust carbs accordingly and make notes on that.

Sticking with our 80kg trainee with maintenance Calories of 2,500, an example is set out below.

Macronutrients	Protein	Fat	Carbohydrate

	1.4-2.2g/kg (0.63 - 1g/lb) of bodyweight	15-25% of total calories per day (10% minimum for short periods)	The remaining Calories to fulfil daily requirements.
Example for 2,500 Calorie diet and 80kg trainee. (Maintenance)	1.8g per kg = 144g protein (4 Cals/g x 144 = 576 Cals)	20% of Calories. 2,500 x 20% = 500 Calories = 55g fat (500 Cals divided by 4 Cals/gram)	2,500 – (576+500) = 1,424 Calories = 356g carbs (1,424 Cals divided by 4 Cals/gram)

Again, the above is just an example of how you would set up the Calories. Protein can be adjusted, and carbs/fats can be adjusted to suit. (More on adjusting in the next chapter)

GAINING MACROS (BULKING)

Now, here is where it gets a bit more fun: more food = more choices. Once you hit your protein requirements, then the rest is really up to you again. Most of the extra calories should come from carbs though, as this will fuel heavy workouts.

One thing is guaranteed, no matter what, if you're not gaining weight, you're not eating enough. Taking messed up guts and digestion out of the equation (which shouldn't be an issue if you're eating plenty of veg and fruit), you're just not eating enough food.

There're hard gainers out there, but you ask them how much food they're eating, and they can't tell you. Putting on quality muscle mass is tough. Eating a lot of food sounds like fun, but it can get very boring and challenging after a few weeks/months.

Use these targets as guidelines, and if you're still not gaining, add 5-10% more Calories.

Protein is much the same as maintenance Calories due to the fact you have a surplus of energy, so the body needs the minimal essential protein. Overeating protein is fine, just not needed as the extra carbs could help fuel workouts. So, protein targets are set about 1.4-2 grams per kg.

Fats can get increased just to fill the gap and get the Calories in. Remember that fat is 9 Calories per gram, so it is a lot more Calorie dense, allowing you to eat more.

Again, 80kg trainee, 2,500 Calorie maintenance with a 20% surplus this time = 3,000 Calories.

Macronutrients	Protein	Fat	Carbohydrate
	1.4-2g/kg (0.63 – 0.9g/lb) of bodyweight	15-25% of total calories per day (10% minimum for short periods)	The remaining Calories to fulfil daily requirements.
Example for 3,000 Calorie diet and 80kg trainee. (20% surplus)	1.7g per kg = 136g protein (4 Calls/g x 144g = 544 Calls)	20% of Calories. 3,000 x 20% = 600 Calories =67g fat (600 Calls divided by 9 Calls/g	3,000 – (544 + 600) = 1,856 Calories = 464g carbs (1,856 Calls divided by 4 Calls/gram)

If these numbers don't work and you would struggle to get in 464 grams of carbs while keeping protein and fat in order, then you could increase the numbers and take away from carbs. In my experience, workout performance tends to be higher in individuals on high carb diets.

SUMMARY OF MACRO TARGETS

There you have it, the only three goals you have to consider when it comes to body composition and performance.

Each one of these calculations is a starting point only, as previously stated. If you are losing weight on your weight gain macros, then you have to increase Calories. If you are gaining weight on fat loss, then you gave to decrease Calories.

Here's where the art comes in. Sometimes on weight loss plans, you might not lose weight for two weeks. Does that mean you should cut Calories dramatically? Possibly.

If you have just started a diet and aren't losing weight, then chances are you need to cut calories.

If you're deeper into the diet, then you might just be at a plateau. If your performance is increasing, you're looking better and generally feel good, then don't cut Calories or increase output yet. Give it another week before you change anything.

When dieting, it is very easy to get into your own head about it. You'll want to drastically cut Calories way too soon, and you won't have a successful diet. Calories have to be cut, potentially very low, just try and keep weight loss in line with guidelines.

Guidelines for weight loss aim to lose around 0.5-1% of your body weight per week to reduce the potential of too much muscle and strength loss. Previously we discussed that 3500 Calories is roughly 1 lb (0.5kg) of fat. This is where the 500 Calorie per day deficit came in as this *should* make you lose 0.5kg. Remember that weight loss will be a little stored glycogen (carbs), as well as some lean tissue and water. Ideally, most of it is fat, and we ensure this by heavy weight training. Use these guidelines, and you should be fine, just try and be objective about it and remove the emotionally biased subjective opinion out of it.

For gaining, after a certain amount of years in the gym, you won't be seeing too many changes on a weekly basis. It gets VERY slow when you're deep into your training career.

Below is the chart referring to the recommended weight gain per month.

Experience Level:	Definition	Rate of Monthly Weight Gain
Beginner	Able to progress most training loads in the gym on a week to week basis	1 to 1.5% of bodyweight
Intermediate	Able to progress most training loads in the gym on a month to month basis	0.5 to 1% of bodyweight
Advanced	Progress is evident only when viewed over multiple months or a year	Up to 0.5% of bodyweight

(14)

Below are the intakes for a 180 lb (82 kg) male and a 130 lb (59 kg) female respectively at each training age, calculated by multiplying 3500 by the target rate of gain per month, divided by 30 to show the daily average increase required:

Experience Level:	Calories Above Maintenance at 180 lbs (82 kg)	Calories Above Maintenance at 130 lbs (59 kg)
Beginner	1-1.5%/month = ~200-300 kcals/day	1-1.5%/month = ~150-225 kcals/day
Intermediate	0.5-1%/month = ~100-200 kcals/day	0.5-1%/month = ~75-150 kcals/day
Advanced	Very slight increase up to 100 kcals/day	Very slight increase up to 75 kcals/day

(14)

Try your best to keep weight gain in these regions for long term sustainability. Otherwise, it will get messy, and you'll have a lot more work to do when it comes to dieting time.

MICRONUTRIENTS, FIBRE, ENZYMES & GOOD BACTERIA

Macros are important, and as I discussed, you can lose weight eating cake and protein shakes.

The question is, though, is it worth doing it? Probably not.

When we're talking about health as well as body composition goals, the healthier you are, the easier it will be to get to those goals.

Micronutrients are your vitamins and minerals, your fruit and vegetables. They come with more than just macronutrients, and they will keep the metabolic processes in your body functioning and keep your energy in the right place.

Being Calorie deficient is necessary for fat loss but being nutrient deficient isn't.

Rather than putting complex demands on your diet, try and get at least 1-2 portions of vegetables for every 1000 Calories you eat and one portion of fruit. Keep the staple foods that are easy to buy and readily available but try to vary it as much as possible, and you will reduce the risk of being deficient in any vitamins and/or minerals.

The other benefit of this is that you will give your body plenty of digestive enzymes. Fruit and veg help you digest other foods too; you are only as good as what you can digest.

If your gut is messed up, which is often the case with strict, low variety diets, then you will have lots of digestive discomfort and other issues. By eating a wide range of healthy foods, you will burn more fat. Only recently, there was a study done on 72 twins that had different bacteria in the gut, and they were completely different body fat levels, even with the same diet. The difference was that one had good gut bacteria, and the other didn't. (15).

So, the key to a healthy body composition diet and to ensure success is to stay healthy as well as following the law of Calories in vs. Calories out.

Good gut bacteria are fed by fermented foods. Look for things like kimchee, sauerkraut, Kiefer, kombucha, nato, pickles, and tempeh, etc.

Keeping a healthy gut is the key to a successful diet so keep a variety of all of the above foods in your diet to ensure adequate vitamins & minerals (micronutrients) as well as fibre and good bacteria. Fibre is important for food transit in the gut. It helps pull food through your intestines and keeps things moving.

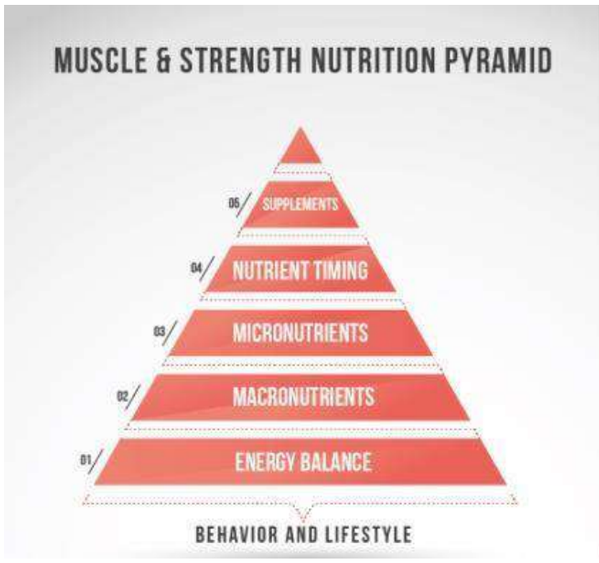
If you are consuming too many bad Calories, and not enough good foods, then you won't be able to support your goal of gaining muscle. You are only as good as what you can digest. I've seen it before with clients, they eat A LOT of food, but it's the wrong food. Then they have digestive distress and can't process what they're eating. Keep the good stuff in and stay on track.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- Eat 1-2+ portions of veg per 1,00) Calories and 1-2 pieces of fruit.
- Eat fermented foods.
- Vary your sources to ensure nutrient diversity

CARB CYCLING

Calories matter, before anything else, if your goal is fat loss, you have to eat less than you're burning. The opposite goes for weight gain. We've discussed this in detail above in order of importance. First, it was Calories, then macros. Followed by micros (vitamins, minerals, and fibre), now we move onto nutrient timing.



(14)

This pyramid is one of the simplest forms of education. Print this, along with the exercise pyramid, follow it in order of importance and you will make a lot more progress than you ever have before if you have never focused on it.

Nutrient timing and carb cycling can help for several reasons; however, they won't help you if the base of the pyramid isn't in place. For example, if you are doing no carb days and high carb days, and you still eat more than your maintenance Calories, your Calorie balance for the week will be higher, and you will put on weight.

There's some research that shows that a low carb diet combined with interval training can help with improving body composition and help metabolic diseases. (16.) As well as low carb ketogenic diets helping insulin resistance (the ability to handle carbohydrates) (17.) That's a double win. So, although carbohydrate cycling isn't the most important thing when it comes to staying lean or fat loss in general, it can help.

I can't state enough the justification to focus on the base of the pyramid first. If you're not eating carbs, but you're eating a ton of calories, you won't be lean. Just remember that you have to eat less than you're burning on a daily (if not, weekly basis) to lose fat. Your body doesn't know what day or week it is, it just knows energy, so take an average over the week to roughly determine your deficit (or surplus).

You can keep Calories the same throughout or you can change them each of the days, as long as the weekly deficit is the same, the outcome should be the same, fat loss.

Let's take a 2,500 maintenance Calorie figure for an 80kg male and 2.3g protein per kg. Taking 20% away from this is 2,000 Calories. This would mean weekly Calories to create a deficit of 3,500 Calories (roughly 1 lb of fat) is 14,000.

That could look something like either of the tables below.

Day	Carbs	Calories	Protein	Calories	Fats	Calories	Total daily Calories.
Monday	250g	1000	184g	736	29.3g	264	2,000
Tuesday	50g	200	184g	736	118g	1,064	2,000
Wednesday	150g	600	184g	736	73.8g	664	2,000

Thursday	50g	200	184g	736	118g	1,064	2,000
Friday	50g	200	184g	736	118g	1,064	2,000
Saturday	250g	1000	184g	736	29.3g	264	2,000
Sunday	150g	600	184g	736	73.8g	664	2,000
Weekly total	950g	3,800	1,288g	5,152	560.2g	5,040	14,000

As you can see, the total Calories stay the same, but you have three days that are different. Low days = 50g carbs, medium days = 150g carbs and high days = 250g carbs. Fats are lowered or raised to accommodate, but Calories remain the same. This is good to sensitise you to insulin, but the daily deficit is the same.

The next table shows you a fluctuation in both carbs AND Calories.

Day	Carbs	Calories	Protein	Calories	Fats	Calories	Total daily Calories.
Monday	250g	1,000	184g	736	80g	720	2,456
Tuesday	50g	200	184g	736	80g	720	1,656
Wednesday	150g	600	184g	736	80g	720	2,056
Thursday	50g	200	184g	736	80g	720	1,656
Friday	50g	200	184g	736	80g	720	1,656
Saturday	250g	1,000	184g	736	80g	720	2,456
Sunday	150g	600	184g	736	80g	720	2,056
Weekly total	950g	3,800	1,288g	5,152	560g	5,040	13,992

As you can see, both tables give you the same weekly outcome (within 8 Calories). The second table has a couple of days in a big surplus, two at around maintenance and 4 in a bigger deficit. So, when you're in a surplus, you will be storing Calories. Hopefully, as carbs inside the muscle stimulated by weight training and not fat stores.

That's how carb cycling works. How you do it is up to you. Some people prefer to have high carb days on leg days to fuel the bigger workouts. Others like it on rest days after their biggest day so they can feel properly satiated (full) and not be hungry for 1-2 days. Others like it the day before a big leg day, so they have more to energy stored.

I would say it's up to you. If you are lagging in your upper body, then have higher Calories on or around those days. Carb cycling is an art, and your body will respond differently to others. I would say that until you are under 12% body fat, don't bother. Just stick to what you can that keeps you in a deficit.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- Carb cycling can help you make the most of your carbs
- Chose a method you feel works best for you and your priority body parts.
- Stick to your weekly Calorie goal.

MEAL TIMING

In the previous chapter, we have spoken about how carb cycling can benefit body composition and insulin sensitivity. That's a bigger "macro" approach. The "micro" approach would be specific meal timing.

The theory is that if you eat carbs and protein straight after your workout (preferably in liquid form and fast-digesting) then you will blunt any muscle breakdown and you will start the building process straight away. As well as topping up glycogen (carb) stores in the muscle. This is called the "anabolic window" of opportunity.

This is true to an extent research does AND doesn't support it. (18). It really depends on the individual, their current muscle size and capacity, their type of training, and the duration.

In an ideal world, we would be able to have our meals all at pre-determined times, and this would be constant, allowing us to maximise our results.

However, if you look at the nutrition pyramid a few pages back, you see behaviour and lifestyle encompasses the whole pyramid, before anything else.

This means that I can give you the perfect meal timing strategy and pan, but if your schedule doesn't allow it, then you will have to adapt. That's my intention with this book, to give you tools to use in pursuit of your goals.

"If a man only has a hammer, then everything looks like a nail." This means that if you only have one approach, then you won't be able to use any others effectively.

Keeping this in mind, take the following guidelines and apply them to the best of your ability.

The best advice I could give you for any workout is to fuel before your session. This would greatly reduce the need to quickly slam a shake -post-workout as you should still have nutrients available from that pre-workout meal. By having a meal with carbs and protein, you will have available energy from carbs in your bloodstream as well as amino acids from the good quality protein source you consumed.

The longer and harder you train; the more focus will have to be put on pre and intra workout nutrition. If you're not training hard, then it doesn't matter if you're fed. If you train heavy with high volume, then it will serve you to eat before your workout as that type of training is very demanding on those energy systems.

Time	Required?	Recommended intake (g)			Timing of ingestion	Type of carbohydrate (GI)	Form (liquid or solid)
		CHO	PRO	FAT			
Pre-exercise (1-2 hours)	Not essential but recommended	30-100g	25-40g	To preference within daily intake limit	As stated,	Does not matter	Solid
Pre-exercise (< 1 hour)	Not if consumed something in 1-2-hour window.	20-75g	25-35g	<15g ideally	As stated,	High	Preferably liquid
During exercise	Not if you've eaten pre-workout (maybe beneficial if training 60+ mins)	30-60g/hour	10-20g	0	Sipped throughout session	High	Liquid only
Post exercise	Yes	>50	>25	To preference within daily intake limit	If fasted, less than 1 hour. If fed 1-2 hours	The first session of the day – high. The last session of the day - doesn't matter	Doesn't matter, liquid can be more convenient

People overemphasise the importance of the -post-workout "anabolic window." It hasn't been shown to be as anabolic as once thought, especially if you have eaten pre-workout. (18). However, it is agreed through piers that

it definitely won't harm you, as long as you stick within your daily targets. So, while it's not conclusive that it doesn't help, it won't harm you. The best advice I can give you is not to stress, just do what you can when you can.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- The anabolic window isn't as anabolic as the pre-workout window, and you don't have to hurry a -post-workout meal.
- Eat a balanced meal with carbs and protein pre-workout.
- Find a system that works for you and your Calorie targets.

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REVERSE DIETING, FINISHING YOUR DIET AND TRANSITIONING TO A SUCCESSFUL GAINING PHASE

When the dieting is over, you have a few roads you can go down. My job is to best advise you which one to take.

Option 1; go straight into a surplus and start gaining straight away and eat as much as you can.

Option 2; slowly drip feed carbs and Calories back up and stay as lean as possible.

Option 3; put on a little body fat quickly, then gradually increase Calories.

I suggest option 3 for various reasons, through observation as well as personal experience.

The temptation is to hold onto being extremely lean for as long as possible but let me tell you, you will truly struggle to do this. Especially if your body fat is very low at the end of a diet. Your body is starving, hormones aren't optimal, and it's basically surviving.

You will try and stay shredded (under 6% body fat on callipers), and your body won't thank you for it. Testosterone is potentially below safe clinical levels and can take the length of the diet or longer to return to baseline again. (20), (21), (22).

While it isn't completely detrimental to stay shredded -post-competition or diet, you can stay lean. It will come at the expense of a little strength, negative hormone balance, and a decrease in strength, but it isn't out of the question, I just don't recommend it.

My best advice is to quickly put on some body fat (1-3%) and then gradually increase Calories from there. What does this look like?

This would be something like having a cheat night after the end of the diet. Then for 1-2 weeks following, you would still eat healthy, as normal and add in some foods you've been missing out on, without overdoing it. You should still exercise but not to the same intensity. Your body is probably tired and drained from being in a deficit for a long time, so training 100% isn't recommended. Take it easy for at least one week depending on your situation, longer if you have been dieting hard for 10+ weeks.

If you train after being in a deficit, and you add in Calories (mainly from carbs and a little fat), you will put on lean mass due to the fact your body is sensitive to the extra Calories.

Don't be surprised if you put on up to 3-5 kg's pretty quickly. If you've been dieting for a long time, your body will be deprived of water and carbs so that you will put a lot of this back on, it won't all be fat. You might even find you look better due to muscle fullness.

Be careful, though, if all you do is eat junk food after your diet and you go from training every day, eating clean, doing cardio; to training half-assed and cutting out Calories, you will quickly rebound and look average very quickly.

By allowing yourself some freedom and flexibility -post-diet, without eating everything in sight, you can stay relatively lean and putting on some lost muscle at the same time. Just don't try and hold onto anything below 6-7% as your body and hormones won't thank you for it.

Know that being comfortable with getting "fluffy" is one of the hardest things when you are potentially the leanest you've ever been. It's more of a mental battle than a physical one. Sometimes it takes a few attempts to master this process. I think everyone wants to stay shredded when they get that lean, and it becomes obsessive and addictive. It's only after you've done it once or twice that you realise you are in a bad place and holding onto unhealthy levels of conditioning is unrealistic.

By adding in your free meals, you will satisfy cravings, you will put on some much-needed weight and you will feel a lot healthier (physically and mentally), food obsession will start to go, and you can start enjoying more of a normal life.

I would go straight into maintenance Calories for your current body weight and allow for the free meals to take you into a slight surplus for the first 1-2 weeks. After that, you can practice more balance and be stricter, sticking to maintenance Calories, or a 10% surplus if you want to gain a bit more muscle when you are more sensitive to the extra Calories.

Extra note. When you are lean, you can handle more food for your body weight than if you were a higher body fat percentage. This allows you to eat more food. If you were 80kg at 5%, your maintenance Calories would be higher than someone who is 80kg and 10-15% body fat. By default, you have less muscle, meaning your metabolism isn't as high.

This means closer to the end of your diet, and you might have more leniency to have a higher surplus than recommended. However, this big surplus will eventually have to be reduced when you put on a little body fat. Just be sure to be taking measurements and know where you are at. If you only measure once post-diet, you can quickly get out of shape, so try and keep some sort of accountability.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- The -post-diet window is a key time to add on some lost muscle you may have lost during your diet.
- Allow yourself 1-2 weeks of free meals, as well as eating healthy to stabilise your body weight.
- Once you've had a few meals you've missed, transition into maintenance Calories (see above to calculate) or a slight surplus.

TIPS TO STAY ON TRACK – ROUTINE & LIFESTYLE

Everything I've said is good in principle, but how do you ensure you stay on track and make it fit into your lifestyle?

What's the point in all of this if you can't actually stick to it?

No matter what I say, it's up to you to make it fit. It's your life, and if you want to achieve the goals you've set, you're going to have to work proportionally harder to achieve these goals.

The biggest tip I can give, and the simplest, most overlooked tip is to plan ahead.

It sounds so simple in theory but when you leave it to chance, the chance will win, and you will lose. You'll be left with a subpar choice, and you will not only be compromising your goas but also your mind. You will have sacrificed your goals because YOU didn't take action and plan ahead of time.

You have to find something that works for you. What is easy for me might be completely unrealistic for you to stick to.

For day to day tips to stay on top of your diet, you should find the simplest methods to keep you on track.

That can look like either of these.

- Prepare your food ahead of time — the night before or at the beginning/end of each week. Meal prep is the most guaranteed way for you to know what you're eating. Cooking all your main meals for during the day ahead of time (Sunday evening for example) and freezing some will ensure you have good food before you ever need to think about what to eat.
- Know local restaurants, cafes, and supermarket menus. This will ensure that you have a few "go-to" options that you can fall back on if you forget your meal prep or have to pop out for meetings etc. Every store these days has all nutritional values online or on MyFitnessPal. There's no excuse to get caught out.
- If you're eating out at night, check the menu ahead of time, plan that meal first and make the others fit around that. You can pre-select foods and input your best guess. Remember most restaurants cook for flavour so you should probably add more fat to what you think it might be.
- Have a backup snack handy for when you can't escape — something like a piece of fruit and protein shake, some beef jerky or a yogurt. Usually, something easy to carry/store, so you never have to have a bad option if you don't want to.
- Fast. If you can't get good food, you don't have a good option as back up, and then it's ok to fast. It's ok to be hungry, your body won't drop all of the muscle you've worked hard to earn off. If you're trying to maximise muscle gain, then I would try and not leave it longer than 4 hours without a meal, but as long as your daily totals are in place, then things will be fine.

There are plenty more options to help you stick to the plan, but it's up to you to figure them out. Even if I was to give you a meal plan, then it's your job to follow that plan. No one else will do it for you.

Lastly, getting in shape requires a change in lifestyle. You'll have to make sacrifices, different choices when you're out. Sometimes even avoiding events if they are too risky. This doesn't mean you should live like a monk, but it does mean you have to have your goals in mind. Otherwise, you will be side-tracked very quickly.

Your "circle" might have to change. If you're hanging about with guys who are always in the pub, then it's going to be very difficult to stay on track. You will have to make that decision yourself.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- It's up to you to plan your day/week/month and life, sacrifices will have to be made.
- Prepare ahead of time. If you leave it to the last minute, the chances are that you'll struggle to stay on track

- Think about changing your circle. If you're not happy with your friends and the fact they don't support who you want to be then you may have to limit spent with some of them, focusing on quality time instead of "all the time."

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SLEEP AND IT'S IMPORTANCE FOR FAT LOSS, MUSCLE GAIN AND RECOVERY.

Show me someone who consistently sleeps 8 hours per night and that person will be in charge of their life and they will be healthy.

What it takes to sleep 8 hours is full control of your schedule, knowing your priorities, as well as good sleep hygiene to ensure you can actually drift off to sleep.

It is no secret that sleep is one of the biggest keys to muscle growth, fat loss, and recovery. Lack of sleep will hinder your body composition goals. (23).

Weight training actually reduces sleep apnea (24). Lack of sleep obviously contributes to lack of energy (25) as well as negatively effecting body composition (26).

I think you've figured out the importance of sleep by now. Yes, you can "get by" on less sleep, especially in the world of hustle now, sleep later.

If you're natural (not on steroids), you will have a hard time putting on as much muscle as other genetically gifted athletes if you're not sleeping. Of course, there is an exception like anything. There will always be others out there doing less and getting more, and they're called outliers. When we look at the trend, you will see that to perform optimally and recover properly, you should get adequate sleep.

I have to give you advice on what works best for most people. Not what only works for me or a small percentage. There's no point in doing that. Otherwise, this book would be useless, and you wouldn't get value from it. That being said, if you are doing some of the things in this book and they don't work, then try a different approach. Don't just guess, assess, and review, then come back and change 1-2 things and see how it goes.

With sleep, it is very difficult to manage as you can be out like a light some nights and others wide away, staring at the ceiling with an overactive mind. I'll tell you what's worked for me and what I've observed, as well as researched.

Follow these points to optimise your time in the sack.

- Remove all electronics from your bedroom. Your bedroom shouldn't have any standby lights on as any dim light can affect the quality of your sleep. Charge your phone in a different room, buy a cheap analogue alarm clock or fitness watch with an alarm if you are afraid of not waking up in time, your bedroom should have no temptations to drift off, if your phone is there, you'll probably use it. (27).
- Limit TV, laptop, and eReaders before bed. These can affect your sleep quality, take you longer to fall asleep and reduce early morning alertness. (28), (29) Read a real book instead under candlelight to help calm down your brain and body.
- Upgrade your mattress, bad mattresses aren't good for stiff muscles. Also, cheap mattresses that are bad at regulating core body temperature can negatively affect your quality of sleep. You should be able to regulate your body temperature to optimised sleep. (30).
- Write in a journal before bed. Get your thoughts on paper and plan your day ahead. Just by doing this, you will reduce anxiety and reduce chances of overthinking. If you also write down three things you're grateful for, as well as opportunities for improvement, you will notice better feeling of wellbeing. (31)
- Have a light meal 1 hour before bed, including some protein and carbohydrates. The carbohydrates can help you release serotonin and dopamine (feel-good hormones) that will calm your body down and make it easier to go to sleep. A yoghurt with some fruit might be a good option. (32), (33)
- Stretch for 10-30 minutes before bed. By stretching, you will calm down your body (and mind) put it in a more relaxed state, and you should feel a lot more relaxed. You'll also promote blood blow to the muscles as well as help recovery so you will get more benefits.

By finding a good sleep hygiene routine, you are giving your body the best chance to recover. Your mind will be fresher, motivation will be higher, and your energy will also be better. If all of these things are in place, you'll be able to train harder too. The harder you train, the better results you'll get, and that repair process all happens when

you’re sleeping (if your diet is good too). You can “get by” on less sleep, but your body will be thriving when you start getting 8 hours every night. Sleep is one of the most overlooked factors when it comes to getting the results you want.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- Sleep is where most of your progress will be made, try to get 7-9 hours.
- Find a routine that works for you and stick to it, your body won’t like it if you are always changing your bedtime.
- Keep a sleep journal to see what works and what doesn’t. Sometimes we are unaware of what is causing us to stay awake.

STRETCHING AND MASSAGE TECHNIQUES

Continuing the recovery part of this eBook, we are onto stretching and massage. Both have merit in a workout plan. They can help with recovery as well as feelings of wellbeing.

If you read the technique section, you will know the importance of a full range of motion with exercise. This will keep your muscles healthy, as well as reducing the risk of injury. However, as with any bodybuilding program, there is a lot of stress on your body. You will be massively overloading muscles to create growth, so there's a potential for them to be overly tight and restricted.

If you were looking to grow your chest, for example, you will be doing a lot of pushing and forward movements. If you didn't match this with as much volume for the back (the opposing muscle group), you could end up with tight and short pecs. This could cause overly rounded shoulders, and you might end up with less than optimal posture, which can lead to injuries.

I'll do my best to layout a well-balanced workout plan that ensures you aren't creating issues, but everyone is different. Genetically and structurally, you will have different demands on your body, and the outcome might be different.

Adding in stretching (before, during, or after your workout) can help address any specific issues you may have. Remember that you should rarely blindly follow a plan, especially if it's to the detriment of your physical (and mental) health? Always ask yourself, is this working for me? Can I do better? Do I need to make changes?

By asking these questions, you can plug the holes of any workout or diet plan you are following.

This is where stretching, foam rolling, and massage techniques come into play. They help with many issues, tight muscles, and the sensation of stiffness too. For some, it can help with (DOMS) Delayed Onset of Muscle Soreness, the soreness the next 1-3 days after your workout yet the research isn't conclusive so, like anything, do what feels right for you and use what I'm about to outline as a guide. (34).

Try to customise everything for your needs. If a muscle group feels tight, spend more time on that.

The various techniques listed below are just suggestions, do more if you can, less if you feel you don't need to. One thing I highly recommend is to spend the same amount of time stretching/mobilising throughout the week as you do lifting weights.

If you are training 4 times per week for 1 hour, you have to find 4 hours throughout the week to look after yourself. That might not be doable for everyone, just know that it will help you. One way to get these 4 hours in for this example would be to warm up and mobilise for 10 minutes each time and cool down/stretch for 10 minutes. That's 1 hour and 20 minutes. If you add in stretches for muscle groups, you're not training, in between working sets as an active recovery, that could be another 20-40 minutes spread out through the week. If you do 1 yoga class or get a massage for an hour, you're at 3 hours. Then you can just add 5-15 minutes stretching before bed. The benefits of stretching before bed is that it calms your body down and can settle your mind after a long day.

General guidelines as follows.

- Warm-up/mobilise/foam roll pre-workout – 5-10 minutes. No static stretching here unless you have problem areas like tight pecs for example. Static stretching relaxes muscles, and you don't really want that before you have a big workout. The same goes for foam rolling, this will temporarily give you an extra range of motion for up to 30 minutes so you can address any problem areas pre-workout if you feel it helps, foam rolling could potentially be better than dynamic stretching (35).
- Cool down and stretch post-workout. – 5-20 minutes. As stated previously, foam rolling reduces the soreness that can follow -post-workout and for the days to follow. By foam rolling you can reduce this soreness so start by rolling the muscles you have trained and follow this with static stretching for anything between 30-60s up to 3-5 minutes of a specific muscle group. If you have unaddressed issues that haven't been worked on for years, then this extra time will really help you increase the range of motion over time.

- Stretching before bed 5-30 minutes. The longer, the better, this won't really harm you. If you have sore muscles, it can help with that sensation, but it can also help you increase range of motion in the problem areas. The main areas for most people that I've seen and experienced are the pecs, hip flexors, hamstrings, and glutes.
- Massage 1-2 times per week by an experienced therapist. This can be ongoing, or you can do it for a phase. The reason I say experienced therapist is because some therapists aren't doing anything. An experienced therapist will spend time on the problem areas and be able to adapt pressures and use special techniques as and when required. This is the most expensive option, but if you have injuries and pain that have been about for years, it might be time to invest for a month or 2. If you can afford the luxury, get them every week, it will only benefit recovery, blood flow, and help with stress too.
- Yoga 1-2 times per week. This forces you to stretch in a specifically designed manner that attacks many of the problem areas people have. The good thing about yoga is that it can often be relaxing, and you are being told what to do for up to 90 minutes, depending on the class you're doing. I find this the best for clients who really don't have the discipline to stretch themselves away from the gym.

If you can stick to a similar schedule, then my bet is your body will thank you for it, unless you have some specific issues that need to be addressed, this sort of schedule will keep you as good as you can as long as you can. I'm no clinical physician so can't prescribe anything to you, if you have serious injuries or chronic conditions then you have to see a professional.

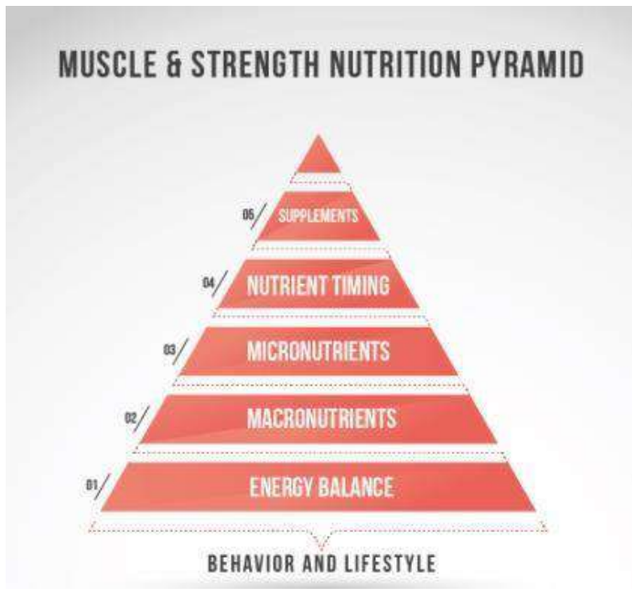
Aside from any serious issues, you will hugely benefit from a good stretching program and massage too. The benefits aren't just direct to the muscle, and it has a great effect on your nervous system. The parasympathetic nervous system is the rest and recovers part of your nervous system. When we exercise, we activate the sympathetic nervous system, the fight, or flight. These days, most people are sympathetic system dominant, meaning they are never really relaxing and recovering. When you start stretching or yoga, you slow down, you breathe, you relax, and your body starts to calm down. This is where the recovery happens. Always make stretching a priority, even more so if you feel like you don't have the time. That's exactly when you should do it.

KEY LEARNING POINTS.

- Match training hours with stretching hours. If you train 4 hours per week, then you should have 4 hours of total stretching/massage/recovery techniques.
- Always seek a clinical professional if you have serious issues.
- Prioritise stretching to help recovery too, your body grows and repairs outside the gym and stretching helps this.

SUPPLEMENTS

Now it's time to discuss supplements and their importance. Check out below I've put the muscle and strength nutrition pyramid to show you the importance of certain aspects of how you construct and good nutrition and supplement plan.



The reason I've left supplements to this stage is that there is so much more to focus your energy on before you consider supplements.

While I feel there are some staple supplements any keen gym goer should be using, they should never be prioritised before real whole foods and the energy balance (Calories in vs. Calories out) for your current goals.

I'll list out primary, secondary and "nice to have" below.

The key here is to have a critical mind, if you want recommendations, check the end of this section for 1-2 suggestions per supplement.

PRIMARY SUPPLEMENTS – These are more essential than the others for general health and body composition, I see a bigger return on money spent on these.

Omega 3 – a 1000-2000mg total of combined EPA/DHA. (Eicosapentaenoic acid/Docosahexaenoic acid). Spread out throughout the day with meals.

This is a key one as it's been shown to help improve body composition, increase performance, and help with other things like depression too and cardiovascular health too. (36), (37), (38), (39), (40).

The western diet is high in low quality foods, so it's difficult to get adequate nutrition from healthy foods due to the nature of farming and overconsumption of certain food groups. If you are eating 3+ portions of fresh Atlantic salmon (also known as keta salmon), then you won't need to supplement as much so you can aim for the lower end of the guidelines. So, see this as a conditionally primary supplement. If you eat healthily, plenty of whole food sources, plenty of vegs and plenty of high omega three fish like Atlantic salmon, mackerel, herring, and sardines then you shouldn't need anywhere near as much of this supplement. Be sure your food is in high quality though otherwise; you'll be better off adding this in.

This total is the total strength of (EPA and DHA) in the omega three fish oil, which means that for a 1000mg (same a 1 gram) capsule, some might be as low as 120mg of combined (EPA/DHA.)So, you would have to take nine capsules just to hit the lower end of guidelines and 17 capsules for the higher end. So not all fish oils are created equal. Look for higher strength fish oils and sensibly sourced. Anything above 330mg per 1000mg capsule is good. Usually, the more money you spend here, the better, but not always. Most good omega three supplements will have around 500-600mg of combined (EPA/DHA) per capsule.

Multivitamin – 1 normal serving per day as per manufacturer guidelines.

Multivitamins should really just be a nice to have a supplement, but I would consider them conditionally essential depending on your situation. Some multi supplements can have upwards of 4000% of your recommended daily allowance. This really means that you are just going to urinate out the stuff you don't use, so is it really essential? Probably not in this situation.

The thing is, if you've taken care of the base of the pyramid (your energy balance, macronutrients and micronutrients) then you should be getting plenty of fibre and a variety of vegetables, covering you for most of your nutrient needs.

Things change when you end up in a prolonged calorie deficit, though, you raise the chances of increasing your nutrient deficiencies slightly, more so if you're not eating enough vegetables. This could leave you hungrier than you should be as well as create some other issues.

I'd recommend something basic that has reasonable levels of a full spectrum of vitamins and minerals. You shouldn't need much else. Some bodybuilding multi's will have you chugging down nine pills claiming you need them all to cover your bases. While there are some supplements out there that cater for certain needs (females, pregnancy, vegans) you really just need a basic one. Again, options below.

Vitamin D (the sunshine vitamin) – 20-80 IU/kg per day. Fat-soluble so take with a fat-containing meal.

Vitamin D is created by the body when you are in direct skin contact with the sun. As you may know, the UK isn't the sunniest nation in the world, so vitamin D deficiencies are common here, as well as the rest of the world.

The issue is, when vitamin D deficient, it can lead to a few issues. Increased obesity (41), increased risk of dementia (42), and decreased strength (43).

It goes without saying that it can be considered as one of the most important vitamins you can take. Of course, every vitamin and mineral you consume is important and has implications of being deficient in their own ways. I just see vitamin D as being one of the more important ones.

It's safe to take up to 5,000 (IU) per day.

Creatine monohydrate – 5-10 grams per day. Timing not important.

Creatine is probably one of the most researched and scientifically backed sports performance supplements on the market. The main benefits are its effect on muscle building, and it can increase power output. (44), (45).

As long as it is 100% creatine monohydrate, you won't have any issues. Many companies add fillers to it or other products to help performance, but you don't need them. Find one that says Creapure as this is guaranteed to be 100% monohydrate due to trademark laws.

If you are going to take any natural performance-enhancing supplement, then creatine is the one you should be thinking of. It's cheap and has the most convincing science for it. There are lots of others out there but nothing with as much credible research as this.

You won't feel its effects directly as its non-stimulatory. However, it will increase lean muscle mass due to its ability to draw water into the muscle as well as help create more power and strength output. Of all the primary supplements, this is the one that will get you the biggest results. That extra rep, that extra kg. It doesn't sound like much initially, but if you're in this for the long run then you're going to cherish every kilo lifted and every rep performed.

That's all you should be focusing on for the primary supplements. Anything else will just drain your bank account for very little return. Don't get me wrong, I am a big believer in supplements and take a lot of them. However, the 5% maximum benefit they give won't give you better results than increasing your training intensity and having a great diet and lifestyle management.

Caffeine – 4-7mg/kg bodyweight. For someone 80kg that's 320mg-560mg. (A large black coffee from costa is 300mg, the strongest I've seen from mainstream coffee shops). Start lower to assess your tolerance.

Yes, it is a supplement — a legal drug technically, and the 2nd drunk liquid in the world after water.

There have been lots of studies showing performance benefits for strength, power, and endurance over the years, and this is widely accepted. (45), (46), (47).

Be warned though as, just like anything worthwhile, you can have too much of a good thing. 1 study showed that after 4 weeks of daily caffeine supplementation, there was actually a performance decrease due to the chronic intake of higher caffeine. (48). in simple terms, if you have too much, it becomes less effective.

Having 1-4 cups of coffee a day is accepted as normal and can even have health benefits. (49)

Supplementing and casually drinking coffee are two different things, so consider that. If you want to maximise the benefits of caffeine, then you are better off not drinking a lot of coffee in general, perhaps drinking decaf if you miss the ritual of drinking it. Then you can "save" the coffee/caffeine for big workouts you are looking to perform in optimally.

If you feel you aren't getting anything from caffeine then take 1-3 weeks away from coffee (decaf is ok as it has no caffeine) and come back to it, you'll definitely notice/feel the effect. There is also a half-life of 4-8 hours of caffeine in your blood, meaning that if you have 100mg of caffeine, 8 hours later there is a chance that 50mg is still in your bloodstream. Think about that the next time your mind is working overtime when you're trying to sleep.

Lastly, some people struggle with drinking coffee, I personally don't understand this at all, but it exists. If you're one of these people, then you can get caffeine pills to get the same effect without the drink.

Superfood powder – 1-4 servings per day.

I've put this in this section because you can't really have too many vegetables, by adding a superfood powder into your routine, you are adding quality nutrients to your diet, which is going to help you feel better and keep your gut working. If your gut is good, then you will have a better chance of using the Calories you put in your body.

A good quality superfood powder will have no added sugar and will have 20+ foods in it, preferably organic. Like all of the supplements listed, nothing will give you as much of a benefit as a very well-balanced diet. Eating plenty of vegetables and fruit, as well as the better-quality superfoods, is going to give you the best chance of recovery and keeping the energy high.

I find that by adding in a superfood powder, you fill the gaps. Combined with a multivitamin, there shouldn't be any issues with nutrient deficiencies. However, I can't hammer home enough the importance of real food first, supplements later.

If anything, adding a scoop of superfoods to your protein shake is a very good quality snack.

SECONDARY SUPPLEMENTS – Not essential for anything in my eyes but can help you towards your goals.

I see these as "nice to haves." There is some science behind these recommendations, and they can benefit your performance and training but not by anything substantial in most cases. You might get outliers that respond amazingly to this, but these people are the exception to the rule. Even if it is the power of placebo, then it can be more powerful than the effect of the supplement itself. If you look at these as "worth a try," you might find you like them, or you can even use them for specific 4-6-week phases, fat loss, for example.

Whey protein, vegan protein, or similar – 1-3 servings per day.

I've put this in the secondary supplements section as it isn't technically needed. If you have adequate protein intake through whole food sources like meat, dairy, eggs, and fish, then you don't need a supplement.

However, the fact is that cooking real food 4-5 times per day just isn't always convenient, so that's where supplementing protein powder comes in handy.

There are plenty of options out there. Whey protein being the best bang for your buck as it is high quality. Vegan protein blends tend to have a lower quality amino acid profile (not as good for protein signalling to build muscle), so I don't recommend them unless you have specific issues with digesting whey protein.

I believe in keeping it simple. Stick to normal high-quality whey protein, and you should be ok. Some people have issues with cheaper whey proteins or why in general so you can opt for a vegan blend with added leucine (the best amino acid for muscle building) or go for a whey isolate (less dairy), or even a beef blend protein. I'll list all below.

You can have this safely up to 3 times per day without too many issues. If your protein is lower in quality, then it might cause you to have the protein farts, and nobody wants that so ease yourself into it. My only advice with this is that you have AT least the same amount of whole food sources with vegetables to match your protein shake servings. So, if you had three shakes, you would have to have 3 whole food meals. It is probably beneficial to change your protein or have a choice to choose from, but not essential if you don't have any issues.

There's 1000's of different protein companies out there so if you are confused, pick one listed below or send me an email to see if what you have is ok. Email me on fabio@fabiobonanno.coach.

Beta-alanine – 3-6 grams per day.

Think of this as the buffer for lactic acid (I'm simplifying here, so it's not too technical). If creative helps you with the heavy stuff, the extra rep or a little more weight, beta-alanine helps with a few more reps.

It mainly acts as a pH buffer and helps with high-intensity exercise in the 1-4-minute rep range, improving performance. (50), (51). Taking this into account, if you're powerlifting, Olympic lifting or doing anything under 15 reps, you probably wouldn't benefit from this supplement as you won't be working long enough to maximise benefits.

If you are performing higher intensity cardio or higher rep sets with drop sets and intensifying techniques, then you can definitely try this. It's relatively cheap considering, and there are no reported side effects apart from the tingling sensation with high doses. If you really struggle with the tingling sensation, then you can break up the dosage into smaller servings throughout the day.

As a side note, it can take up to 4 weeks to saturate the muscle so commit to 4-8 weeks to see if you like it or not.

Electrolytes – serving size not specified.

Electrolytes are key for hydration and the muscles ability to contract. They are made up of sodium and potassium Na+/K+. Your body will naturally regulate these levels, so playing about with this too much will start to do some weird things. If you ensure you have adequate levels, then your workouts can greatly benefit, especially when it comes to bodybuilding training. If your ratios of sodium and potassium are off, then blood volume can be too chronically too high, or too low. (52). If your potassium is too low and sodium too high, this can increase blood pressure long term and create issues. However, having slightly higher blood pressure/volume during a workout can be ok as you will have greater blood flow to working muscles.

Electrolytes help with contractions, energy and "the pump." Say goodbye to any kind of nutrient delivery and muscle volume if you cut out salt from your diet.

The best way to ensure nutrient delivery, healthy muscle contractions, and actions is to drink plenty of water and add a little salt to all meals. If this isn't high on your to-do list, then you can add electrolytes to your pre-workout drink or intra workout drink. This will help you feel the muscle more, help with blood flow and contractions too.

Think of having a salty meal with lots of water before a workout can provide the energy you need through carbohydrates and the pump you need through salt. If anything, a simple recommendation could be to have a balanced meal 1-2 hours before your workout, you can easily digest and add salt to that meal. The salt will slightly increase blood volume if you drink enough water, and you will be able to deliver nutrients to working muscles.

Intra workout carbohydrate drink, branched cyclic dextrin or similar. – Quantity to suit your goals and Calorie needs.

Having a carbohydrate drink during your workout can help extend performance if your sessions are longer than 1 hour and can help reduce the stress response post-workout. (53) (54)

This could have benefit for athletes who are deeper into their training career and need higher volume and longer workouts to create enough of a stimulus. For most, it wouldn't be seen as essential to have a carbohydrate drink as you should have enough stored energy to last a workout. The exception to this rule is if you're on a very low carb diet and/or you are in a long-term Calorie deficit with a higher training volume.

It comes down to personal preference, I find that having an intra workout drink can help with available energy if you haven't eaten in a long time before your session. It will give you available energy and nutrients if you haven't

planned properly. If you really struggle to eat enough Calories in a gaining phase, then it could simply be seen as an option to get more Calories in without an extra meal.

The key here is to pick a carbohydrate supplement/powder that you can easily digest and doesn't cause to much gastric upset (running to the toilet). I find through personal experience that highly branched cyclic dextrin (HBCD) is the best. It is a form of pre-digested carbohydrate that can be used for energy. This allows for easy uptake of carbs and energy. Some companies even make this with electrolytes and other nutrients to support performance, so it can be worthwhile to get these products as it saves you from buying them separately. The issue here is the ratios are fixed by the company, but it can help a lot if convenience is an issue — recommendations at the end of this section.

This type of carb is harder to find. Common other sources are Vitargo, Waxy Maze or Dextrose, dextrose being the cheapest. It can be confusing so if you need more detailed advice, email me on fabio@fabiobonanno.coach.

Pepto-pro or essential amino acids (EAA's) – As per your daily needs intra-workout.

The previous supplement was the carbohydrate part of your intra workout drink. This would be the protein part. Pepto-pro is a form of a complete protein that is pre-digested and easy to consume in liquid form without gastric upset.

This would be more important again, if you haven't consumed a protein-containing meal pre-workout. An example would be if you train in the morning and don't eat breakfast. If you've been sleeping all night and you haven't eaten in 10-12 hours, then there's no circulating protein in your bloodstream. This could cause a breakdown in muscle tissue. The other school of thought is if you break down more muscle by not eating protein, your body will build more after your workout when you eventually do eat protein. So, it's up to you. By having this intra workout protein source, you will guarantee available amino acids, so your body doesn't use precious muscle tissue.

Pepto pro can be expensive, and EAA's are also more expensive to produce than BCAA's so you will find these cost a little more. Recommendations are at the end of this section below. Not an essential supplement. A simple solution is to eat a protein-containing meal pre-workout, but I know this isn't always easy. As long as you hit your total daily protein needs in 3-6+ meals per day in servings of 20-40g+ protein, having this supplement won't even make a noticeable difference hence why it's in the secondary section.

Again, have a critical mind and weigh up everything you're doing to reach your goals. Always look at the muscle and strength pyramid as a reference point for the levels of importance.

I'm going to leave it at that for supplements. I could list a lot more here, but chances are they aren't the best to consider.

BCAA's I hear you say? Not worth it. They have been shown to help muscle soreness and inflammation but aren't a miracle-working supplement to help put on a lot of muscle. (55) If you are looking for anything, then get an essential amino acid supplement or Pepto-pro as stated above. BCAA's are only (3 of the 8) essential amino acids your body can't produce, missing out on the other five is pointless. If you have a whole protein source before your workout, these amino acids will be floating about anyway. If you're training on an empty stomach, then it might be worthwhile to consider an essential amino acid or something similar.

You are more than welcome to email me asking for advice if you have questions about what I've suggested, dosage or anything else on the market to consider. Send a message to fabio@fabiobonanno.coach.

Below is a list of some of the things you can get. Feel free to search for the products elsewhere, and I've just listed Amazon as most people have an account and it's easy enough to use. If you find something elsewhere and want to ask if it's ok, send me a message to fabio@fabiobonanno.coach

Primary supplements	Dosage	Timing	Recommended brands
Omega 3	2000-3000mg combined EPA + DHA (read the label)	Spread out through the day.	https://amzn.to/2UQm0y7 https://amzn.to/2UP5Uop
Multivitamin	1 serving daily	With food.	https://amzn.to/2WT4efA https://amzn.to/2ULMEbo
Vitamin D	500-1000 IU daily	With fat-containing meal.	https://amzn.to/2Gkj8GK https://amzn.to/2UVtj7V
Creatine	5-10 grams daily	Doesn't matter.	
Caffeine	4-7mg per kg of bodyweight	Pre-workout.	Organic coffee where possible or https://amzn.to/2SoQ4nO
Superfood powder	1-4 servings per day to suit needs.	Any time to add nutrients to the diet.	https://amzn.to/2TFBAwk or https://amzn.to/2I7pIBW
Secondary supplements			
Whey protein or similar	1-3 servings per day	Any time to make up protein totals	https://amzn.to/2DvJFwY https://amzn.to/2SrAEza
Beta-alanine	3-6 grams per day. Split dosage if you get tingling.	Not important but pre-workout is good	https://amzn.to/2GlzC1e https://amzn.to/2WX6xOA
Electrolytes	1-2 servings	Pre or intra-workout	https://amzn.to/2BydOeE https://amzn.to/2DtrCaA
Intra-workout carbs	To match your carbohydrate needs	Intra-workout if you need to add Calories or you haven't eaten pre-workout.	https://amzn.to/2UT1ZqU https://amzn.to/2WXd6kj *No need for electrolytes if you get this one
Intra-workout protein/EAA's	10-20 grams	Intra workout if you haven't eaten protein pre-workout.	https://amzn.to/2GlUXYu https://amzn.to/2DtvxnL

CARDIO

The thing feared when gaining muscle and abused when cutting. It is unfairly demonised for most things. I find endurance athletes generally think weights will affect them negatively and strength athletes think cardio will affect them negatively also.

Of course, it's a happy medium between the two needed depending on your goal. Understandably, if you're an endurance athlete, you have to do more endurance, and the same goes for strength athletes, they have to do more strength.

Regardless of the specificity, cardio is pretty important, especially for long term health and longevity. (57), (58), For the purpose of this eBook, I won't go into specifics of programming for endurance events and testing. This isn't about that. I'll outline what you need to know for your goals and leave it at that, and we're already pushing it for applicable information at this stage.

There's a debate between HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) and LISS (Los Intensity Steady State).

HIIT where you perform repeated short bouts of high-intensity exercise, usually something like running, rowing or similar, followed by more rest. True HIIT is usually only 10 seconds of work with up to 6-8 times the rest. So that would be a 10-seconds sprint followed by 60 to 80 seconds of rest. If you are truly making it high intensity, then you need this rest. If you are performing 30 seconds work with 30 seconds rest then, by definition, it's not high intensity, it's probably more medium intensity.

LISS is just a submaximal effort where you keep your heart rate in a certain range for a prolonged period. Usually anything from 50-70% of your maximum heart rate for 20-60 minutes+.

Both have their benefits. LISS actually burns more calories during the exercise due to the continuous nature of it without rest. HIIT will elevate your metabolism more due to the extreme demands. They both have similar outcomes for fat loss. However, HIIT is more time efficient, so it could be a better approach if you are on the clock. (59).

Some coaches swear by one over the other. However, reviews of current research show no statistical difference (60). Here are my considerations because that's why you're reading this. Do what you can comfortably stick to regularly.

If you have no time, then it's unrealistic to expect you to spend 40 minutes doing continuous cardio. In that case, you could add a few sprints to the end of your workout, and you are done. It is optimal, and then there's what is realistic, there you do, maximise that. Don't look at what the global elite are doing at this stage. If you are reading this eBook, you don't need to be focusing on what the 0.1% are doing. Optimise your current approach, be relentless in fine-tuning what you do, and then adapt from there.

Here's the take always for cardio, though, do as little as possible to get a result. Too often, people transition from a surplus to a deficit and add in cardio (5) times per week for 30-40 minutes. When they hit a plateau, they have nowhere to go as they are already maxed out.

Start with 20- minutes LISS 1-2 times per week, or 5 intervals of choice 1-2 times per week and keep it there. Always start off at the low end and increase if you don't see results. If your nutrition is taken care of (in a deficit for fat loss with adequate protein), and you're weight training, then you shouldn't need to do as much cardio as you think. The exception to this is if you're lightweight and just have to add in the activity to burn the extra calories.

Lastly, the deeper you get into a diet, the harder HIIT will be to perform due to reduced energy and NEAT. You will feel very tired, and it could actually affect your weight training sessions due to muscular pain and DOMS. If you find that HIIT is killing you more than it should then you should transition to LISS.

GUIDELINES

FAT LOSS – Start with 20 minutes LISS, or 5 intervals of HIIT 1-2 times per week. Do either one or a combination of both. Add time in 5-minute increments and then sessions depending on your goal. Unless you are going into bodybuilding contest prep, you should never have to do more than (3) sessions per week up to a

maximum of 45 minutes. If you are getting on stage, then it's not unheard of to be doing 5-6 cardio sessions per week of up to 60 minutes.

MAINTENANCE – As long as you match your Calories, I would recommend 1-2 sessions of cardio of choice per week. This will allow you to eat more food and maintain fitness levels to help with weight training performance.

SURPLUS – There's no reason not to do cardio when gaining muscle mass. The main issue is that if you are struggling to put on weight or can't eat enough food is you are burning too many calories. Reducing cardio at this stage could be beneficial to support weight gain. However, that's an eating issue and not a cardio issue. Always try to eat more food were possible before cutting cardio completely.

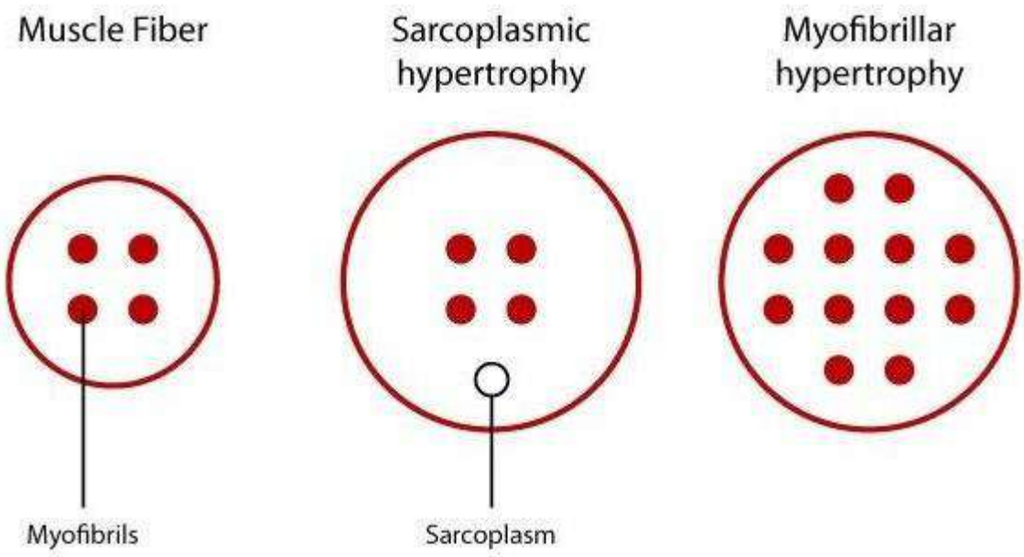
THE TRAINING PLAN (explained)

You've made it this far, if you have read everything I've written, well done, and thank you! I hope you've grasped what matters and what doesn't. As you know by the muscle and strength pyramid, there is a hierarchy of importance. Always relate to this as it determines where you should focus most of your energy on. With the training plan that follows, I've taken all these principles into account to give you a complete plan that covers as much of these principles as possible.

What you need to focus on over a training lifetime is mastering technique in whatever lifts you are performing and then, progressively overloading them with more weight, sets and/or reps as well as adding a higher frequency, potentially. All of these things have their importance in their own right, discussed in the relevant chapter above and simplified with the muscle and strength pyramid.

For the purpose of this eBook, this program puts together many concepts in one. I believe in it and know it will get you great results if you apply everything in it. This doesn't mean it's the best program out there. It isn't the only method of results. I can't hammer home enough the simplicity of making progress in the gym. Mastering technique and adding weight and reps to the bar over time will do you better than any new training plan or technique. Your training career should be a lifelong experiment in what works and what doesn't work for you. Strength training and/or hypertrophy training will both grow muscle (64), you have to choose a discipline to progress. If you want to excel in 1 area, both have to be considered as they can support each other. The key to growing muscle is adding volume, if you can get stronger, this will help with your volume so a combination of both will be in the program. However, we will mainly focus on hypertrophy with added strength work for pure muscle size, look at world strongmen.

There are two main types of muscular hypertrophy, sarcoplasmic and myofibril growth. With a focus on a progressive overload of both of these types of hypertrophy, over time, your body will create new fibres too, this is called myofibrillar hypertrophy. Look at the diagram below to see what this all means.



As you can see, if you grow the myofibrils, you will grow the size of a specific muscle fibre. This is related to strength training.

With sarcoplasm, this is the typical 8-12 higher rep's bodybuilder training that will grow the energy stored around the muscle fibre to cope with future training sessions.

After a prolonged period in a Calorie surplus and with enough stimulus from strength training combined with hypertrophy training, you will see a fuller, harder muscle with more muscle fibres and more storage of energy.

That's the quick run-down of how to grow a muscle. Now what follows are some techniques that will help increase the volume and intensity of certain exercises to achieve growth in all these areas discussed (in no particular order of importance).

CLUSTER SETS

These are sets broken up into mini-sets of reps to build up more reps at a certain weight you would not normally be able to do in a straight-set scenario. For example, you would pick your weight for a 10-repetition maximum. Perform 4-5 reps, rest 10 seconds, and then perform another 4-5 rep. Do this for 3-4 rounds, and you could have a total of 12-20 reps. This would allow you to be able to do a lot more volume for the set weight, creating a better stimulus and in turn, stimulating greater protein synthesis for muscle building. It is also a novel way of working harder and can benefit you by being able to apply more effort into a certain set. (61)

By applying this method, it will allow you to accumulate more volume. The little rests to break up the set give you just enough of a break to ensure you can complete more reps and in turn, more volume.

There have also been some studies showing that straight sets can increase bench press strength instead of resting in-between sets for the same intensity (66). This is why I've included a few different techniques to try and cover all areas of research to optimise muscle hypertrophy. Always look to be objective and don't just blindly follow what you are being told. This program could have one thing that works for you or lots of things. It's hard to tell when trying a new approach, just be sure to monitor your progress and see what feels best for you.

VARIETY

Exercise variety can stimulate muscle growth by creating a novel stimulus. (62) Due to the novelty of an exercise, it can help you push a little bit harder for that movement, and as a result, this can lead to greater hypertrophy. Be

careful, though, changing too often without tracking load or reps will increase the chances of not making progress. Sometimes it's as simple as just increasing weight, sets, and reps over time.

On that note, there will be a focus on progressive overload as well as an intentional "deload" phase to allow the body to recover. The issue with pushing for progress is that we can overreach for too long, and this can cause overtraining (63). When we over-train, motivation drops, energy decreases, often strength decreases beyond the initial training fatigue, we increase injury risk and progress halts. Taking some time off, or training at a greatly reduced volume for the week will allow the body to start the repairing process.

TRAINING TO FAILURE

This is a greatly debated subject amongst the fitness research community. There have been studies showing strength increase while training to failure (65)

As with any research, there usually requires a little more digging. Some coaches absolutely believe that training to failure is essential to create growth; others say leaving some reps in the tank will ensure you can recover and keep making progress. The issue with training to absolute failure is that it is very demanding on the body and can create a lot of soreness. Soreness is not always an indicator of progress.

If you train to failure and this training means you miss repetitions in your next set and ultimately reducing total volume for that exercise, you won't make as much progress. Remember that total volume (sets x reps x weights x days per week) is what determines progress. As long as execution is good, progressing volume is the ultimate goal.

It's not necessarily a black and white difference, there are some grey areas here. What is generally accepted by most is that training to failure on the last exercise of that muscle group is pretty safe. By doing this, it means you don't affect the total volume for that muscle group, thus allowing you to push past normal levels of fatigue and accumulating more beneficial volume.

Also, note that a big percentage of Instagram fitness "experts" aren't natural, meaning they have some assistance from steroids which renders general population training advice useless. Most recreational gym users won't be taking steroids. When you're on steroids, you can recover a lot quicker than others. It's an unfair advantage. Not that there's anything wrong with this, you just have to know that each method has a completely different approach. There's no way you can train yourself to breaking point and recover properly if you're natural. Of course, if you look after nutrition, recovery, sleep, and stress, you can progress faster than most, but this doesn't compare to steroids users. They don't even need to train to put on more muscle than natural athletes, (67) how crazy is that?

LOADED STRETCHES.

Now, we're getting into some slightly more advanced techniques. Firstly, let me explain how it works. The concept is about building metabolites in the muscle to create a greater pump and hormonal response. What this means is that you can create a little more stress in the muscle without having to do more reps.

You complete a set, potentially to failure, or close and at the end, in a stable and strong position, without letting go of the weight, you hold the stretch. You can contract against this loaded stretch to create more trapped blood in the muscle, and this can have an even greater positive effect. This can be pretty brutal and intense, so you have to regulate to your levels but has been shown to create great hypertrophy. (68), (69).

The mechanical load without letting blood escape the muscle creates a compensation response to the training stimulus more so than lifting the load in a normal fashion.

When completing these stretches, you're going to look to gradually increase the stretch to 60-90 seconds. Initially, 15-20 seconds might be your limit, don't worry, it gets easier (you get better at coping with the stress). If you can't complete the normal stretch with weights in your hand, then you can safely put the weights down and quickly transition into an active stretch with bodyweight alone, for example, a chest stretch against the wall or a quad stretch resting against a bench.

HIGH VOLUME SETS

As novice bodybuilders and exercise enthusiasts looking to put on as much muscle as possible, there is a fear of high rep training. The reason for this is potentially due to the fact most people think high reps mean low load or endurance training. This isn't always the case. As with the cluster sets above, you perform more reps (up to 24 or more) at a weight you can only normally lift for 15 reps. this mechanical overload allows for even more hypertrophy.

If you are sensible about what exercises you pick, you can safely push more reps at a higher weight. For example, it would be easier and potentially safer for a novice to push a leg press for more reps at 90% of your 1 rep max (1RM) than a squat at 90% of your 1RM.

The extra reps can grow the type 1 muscle fibres (slow twitch), and this will create growth where a lot of bodybuilders don't normally get growth due to the middle reps.

The higher volume creates a lot more blood flow, which builds up a lot of metabolites like the loaded stretches described above. This can also help sore joints too, as the lower loads will stress those parts less.

RULES AND DEFINITIONS

What follows are common terms, what they mean, and how they fit into the program. There will be notes sections at times to guide you on how hard to work, how much more work to do any other techniques required.

Terms as follows.

AMRAP – As many reps as possible.

Here you would do as many reps as possible to failure on the stated set. This isn't the time to cheat to get big numbers. It means go to "technical failure." If it gets ugly, stop. If you slow down or speed up too much outside of the state tempo, then that's your reps.

DS – Drop set.

After the stated set, you will pick up weights 20-40% lighter and repeat for the stated amount of reps.

Failure – Completing as many reps as you can to technical failure.

You could always get a few more reps with bad form, but that won't allow for good progress. When going to fail it has to be a muscular failure and not complete failure using whatever you can to move the weight. We are trying to overload one muscle, or one movement pattern so use the technique as your guide to stop. A little cheating on the way up is fine, always control on the way down.

RPE – Rate of Perceived Exertion.

This is how hard you are working for that set if stated. Not every set has to be all out to failure. Some sets are "set up" sets meaning you are lifting lighter, practicing perfect technique and ensuring you are ready for the bigger set. This will be stated as a guide to give you an idea of how hard you should be working for that set or exercise.

RPE - Rate of Perceived Exertion	
1-4	Very light to the light effort
5-6	Could do (4-6) more repetitions.
7	Could do (3) more repetitions.
7.5	Could definitely do (2) more reps, a chance at (3).
8	Could do 2 more repetitions.
8.5	Could definitely do (1) more repetition, chance at 2.
9	Could do (1) more repetition.
9.5	Could not do more reps, could do slightly more load.
10	Could not do more reps or more load.

RIR - Reps in reserve

This is another form of how hard you're working, but it's emerging a little more of an accurate gauge of effort than (RPE). (56). At times you can feel like the programmed weight is hard to judge the RPE. By using the RIR approach, you would auto-regulate your intensity to meet the requirements.

What does this mean? We all have good days and bad days, and this means that if you're feeling terrible and were meant to do (8) reps at 100kg at 2 RIR but only got 7, you would lower the weight. Let's say you lowered it to 95kg. Now you perform your set, and you have those (2) reps in reserve, this will allow for progress without nervous system overload.

The inverse applies if you're feeling good. If 100kg feels good and you do (8) reps but feel you have 3-4 more reps in you, then you would go for 105kg maybe and that's your next working set.

Primarily this approach is mainly for strength athletes, but it does apply to hypertrophy as failure doesn't always lead to progress. (As discussed in the muscle and strength pyramids above)

KB – Kettlebell

DB – Dumbbell

BB – Barbell

ES – Each side

OH – Overhand

UH – Underhand

NG – Neutral grip

FFE – Front foot elevated

RDL – Romanian deadlift

SET PAIRING

To explain how the plan will look, here are the basics.

REF	EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS	REPS	KG	REPS	KG	REPS	KG
A1	Pit shark squat	Increase load as the week's progress. 1-2 RIR. Last set AMRAP weeks 1-3	45	8+	2010	3		1						
			45	7+	2010	3		2						
			45	6+	2010	4		3						
			45	5	2010	4		4						
			45	4	2010	5		5						
			45	3	2010	5		6						
A2	Hack squat	Increase load as the week's progress. 1-2 RIR. Last set AMRAP weeks 1-3	45	8+	2010	3		1						
			45	7+	2010	3		2						
			45	6+	2010	4		3						
			45	5	2010	4		4						
			45	4	2010	5		5						
			45	3	2010	5		6						

REF - The column that says the reference is your straight sets or supersets depending on what the plan calls for. In this example, it is grouped as A1 and A2 meaning that you would perform these exercises as a superset. Always note the rest here. It isn't a typo. In week (1) you would perform (8) reps of pit shark squat, rest 45 seconds then do (8) reps of hack squat, rest 45 seconds and repeat for a total of 3 sets.

If it is just A1 then it goes onto B1, you would rest the stated amount for the stated amount of sets and then move onto B1 once all sets and reps are completed.

EXERCISE – Pretty straight forward here. The exercise will be obvious, if there's any training tips or notes I will want you to focus on then that will be in the notes section beside it so look out for that.

Most exercises will be in my exercise videos folder if you want to have a look here - https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6bnK5sq4OHcbXVfYmNqaXJnNlk
If you can't find it, then shoot me an email on fabio@fabiobonanno.coach, and I'll send you a link.

An extra note, it's not the exercise that makes the difference, it's how you do it. I've spoken about tempo earlier in the book as well as the importance of technique. All the components go together to make the most out of an exercise. Your training career should be an evolving journey of mastery, and you should always look to be making small improvements across all exercises. You can tell two people to squat, 1 of them might drop quickly to a half rep while rounding their back. The other might control the decent and have their ass touching their ankles. Guess who will have the better legs? The person with better control and intent. Be a scholar of exercise.

NOTES – Here you will find important notes on exercise technique or any other key points to note. In this example, it's telling you to increase loads as the weeks go on while leaving 1-2 "reps in reserve" (RIR). Also, while completing your last set, you would do as many reps as possible (AMRAP to technical failure).

REST – This is a guideline. If you feel you are missing reps or load, then you can take a little longer. If you check back to the muscle and strength pyramid, then you will see rest is much higher up in the priority list.

REPS – Stated here, pretty self-explanatory, if there's a + beside it, it usually means that there's an AMRAP on another training note I'd like you to do.

TEMPO – This has been discussed earlier. Control the movement based on the numbers given. 12 reps aren't 12 reps if you perform it how you like. A standard protocol for 12 reps is a 4010 tempo that means 4 seconds lowering, no pause, 1-second lifting, no pause, and repeat. That's 60 seconds of work. Often 12 reps take people about 15-20 seconds. That's 1/3 to 1/4 of the time. No wonder people don't get the results they want. They are making a lot less relative effort for the same number of reps. Think about it for a second, the reason so many people don't get the results they are after is that they don't apply themselves to these small rules of training. The tempo is important, be aware of it, try to apply it and progress it, and you will see your results change. I would still want you to master perfect technique and control first so that you are actually loading the target muscle group you want, then focus on tempo. Tempo would be useless if you aren't actually hitting the muscle group you are trying to.

SETS – Pretty self-explanatory. If there is a range of sets and you're feeling really good one day, do the higher end. If you feel bad, then rest a bit longer, keep the intensity up, and do the minimum required to progress.

DATE – Track when you do your workouts here, so you know when you did them. Even more important for months or years down the line to see where you are in terms of progress.

REPS/KG – Each week you complete the program you will input your weight and reps completed for that set. There will be six columns to the right, you will rarely need them. In the above example, you would only need five columns for week 5 and 6. A tip is to input your weight for the next week going by how you performed this week. Always look for manageable, progressive overload. If you want to keep progress for 12-16 weeks, then going all out in every set isn't the goal.

THE TRAINING PLAN

Now it's time for what you've been waiting for, the training plan. Use everything I've said already, apply it, adapt it if you need to and make it work for you.

The program that follows is just a template. Some exercises might work for you, and some might not.

You may feel an exercise works better than the one given, so it's ok to substitute that for something better (for you). For example, if it's a squat and you don't get as much from a squat, you could change for a leg press or hack squat, or you could change your foot position to allow for more range or greater muscle activation. Be your own coach and figure out what works best for you.

Everything else should be followed as closely as possible. An extra note is that if you need a rest day, take a rest day. You won't lose your progress if you have to take a day (or 3 off). Sometimes you just have to listen to your body and take time off, other times, you have to push through and deal with a little fatigue.

It's about regulating your recovery. If you're really training hard, then you have to make sure you're sleeping and recovering well. If you can't recover, then you can stretch out your workout days to ensure you aren't compromising your immune system.

The rest is pretty straight forward if you follow the plan. Take everything we've discussed in this eBook and apply it to the best of your ability to your training and the plan

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FABIO BONNANO COACHING

DAY-1 MONDAY

EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS
Shoulder press machine of choice	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2010	3		1
		45	7+	2010	3		2
		45	6+	2010	4		3
		45	5+	2010	4		4
Weighted pull up (overhand)	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2010	3		1
		45	7+	2010	3		2
		45	6+	2010	4		3
		45	5+	2010	4		4
Chest press machine of choice	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2010	3		1
		45	7+	2010	3		2
		45	6+	2010	4		3
		45	5+	2010	4		4
Seated cable row	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2012	3		1
		45	7+	2012	3		2
		45	6+	2012	4		3
		45	5+	2012	4		4
Hack squat	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2010	3		1
		45	7+	2010	3		2
		45	6+	2010	4		3
		45	5+	2010	4		4
Seated hamstring curl	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2011	3		1
		45	7+	2011	3		2
		45	6+	2011	4		3
		45	5+	2011	4		4
Single leg leg press	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP Reps per leg	45	8+	3010	3		1
		45	7+	3010	3		2
		45	6+	3010	4		3
		45	5+	3010	4		4
Leg press calf raise	NOTE TEMPO - NO CHEATING Change toe angle each set (out/neutral/in)	45	5-8	2512	3-5		1
		45	5-8	2512	3-5		2
		45	5-8	2512	3-5		3
		45	5-8	2512	3-5		4

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FABIO BONNANO COACHING

DAY-2 TUESDAY

REF	EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS
A1	Hammer strength row	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	15	15-25	2011	3		1
			15	15-25	2011	3		2
			15	15-25	2011	3		3
			15	15-25	2011	2		4
A2	Machine pec dec	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	45	15-25	2111	3		1
			45	15-25	2111	3		2
			45	15-25	2111	3		3
			45	15-25	2111	2		4
B1	Underhand lat pulldown	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	15	15-25	2011	3		1
			15	15-25	2011	3		2
			15	15-25	2011	3		3
			15	15-25	2011	2		4
B2	Standing DB lat raise	Last set AMRAP with cheat reps, at least 25 cheat reps.	45	15-25	2011	3		1
			45	15-25	2011	3		2
			45	15-25	2011	3		3
			45	15-25	2011	2		4
C1	EZ bar preacher curl	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	15	15-25	2111	3		1
			15	15-25	2111	3		2
			15	15-25	2111	3		3
			15	15-25	2111	2		4
C2	Trcieps rope extension. High pulley, pulling straight down in front of body	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	45	15-25	2111	3		1
			45	15-25	2111	3		2
			45	15-25	2111	3		3
			45	15-25	2111	2		4
D1	Hack squat	Last set AMRAP	15	25-35	2010	3		1
			15	25-35	2010	3		2
			15	25-35	2010	3		3
			15	25-35	2010	2		4
D2	DB walking lunge	Steps per leg	45	15-25	2010	3		
			45	15-25	2010	3		
			45	15-25	2010	3		
			45	15-25	2010	2		

FABIO BONNANO COACHING

DAY-3 THURSDAY

REF	EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS
A1	Wide grip pull down	Cluster set. Pick your 15RM roughly. Look to fail in last couple of sets getting 3-4 reps for a total of 22-24 reps. USE A TIMER IN FRONT OF YOU FOR STRICT REST. 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
B1	Machine shoulder press	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
C1	Cable flye	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure in lengthened range at the end + loaded stretch for 60s 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
D1	45 degree bench chest supported 2 hand DB row	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch for 60s. 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
E1	Leg extension	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch for 60s 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
F1	Lying leg curl	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch for 60s 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
G1	Standing calf raise While resting do 25 tibialis raises	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch for 60s 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2212	6		1
			10	4	2212	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2212	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2212	6		4
H1	Optional abs of choice	90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4

FABIO BONNANO COACHING

DAY-4 FRIDAY

REF	EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS
A1	Leg press	Cluster set. Pick your 15RM roughly. Look to fail in last couple of sets getting 3-4 reps for a total of 22-24 reps. USE A TIMER IN FRONT OF YOU FOR STRICT REST	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
B1	DB RDL	Cluster set, bottom half partials at the end + loaded stretch 60s USE BELT	10	4	2110	6		1
			10	4	2110	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2110	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2110	6		4
C1	Seated leg curl	Cluster set. Last set AMRAP + bottom half partials + 60s loaded stretch	10	4	2011	6		1
			10	4	2011	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2011	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2011	6		4
D1	Seated calf raise	Cluster set + 60s loaded stretch at the end	10	4	2212	6		1
			10	4	2212	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2212	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2212	6		4
E1	Hammer strength machine row or similar	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end. 90s rest between rounds.	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
F1	Cable lat raises - Crossover the cables behing your back, face away from stack.	Cluster set. Bottom half partial reps to failure at the end, at least 25	10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		4
G1	60 degree Incline DB curl	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end	10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		4
H1	EZ bar skullcrusher	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + 60s loaded stretch	10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		

FABIO BONNANO COACHING

DAY-5 MONDAY

REF	EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS
A1	DB shoulder press	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2010	3		1
			45	7+	2010	3		2
			45	6+	2010	4		3
			45	5+	2010	4		4
A2	Weighted chin up (underhand)	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2010	3		1
			45	7+	2010	3		2
			45	6+	2010	4		3
			45	5+	2010	4		4
B1	Chest press machine of choice	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2010	3		1
			45	7+	2010	3		2
			45	6+	2010	4		3
			45	5+	2010	4		4
B2	DB row	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP. Reps per arm	45	8+	2012	3		1
			45	7+	2012	3		2
			45	6+	2012	4		3
			45	5+	2012	4		4
C1	BB back squat	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2010	3		1
			45	7+	2010	3		2
			45	6+	2010	4		3
			45	5+	2010	4		4
D1	Lying hamstring curl	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP	45	8+	2011	3		1
			45	7+	2011	3		2
			45	6+	2011	4		3
			45	5+	2011	4		4
E1	Bulgarian split squat	Increase load as weeks progress. Last set AMRAP Reps per leg	45	8+	3010	3		1
			45	7+	3010	3		2
			45	6+	3010	4		3
			45	5+	3010	4		4
F1	Standing calf raise	NOTE TEMPO - NO CHEATING Change toe angle each set (out/neutral/in)	45	5-8	2512	3-5		1
			45	5-8	2512	3-5		2
			45	5-8	2512	3-5		3
			45	5-8	2512	3-5		4

FABIO BONNANO COACHING

DAY-6 TUESDAY

REF	EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS
A1	Bent over BB row, use belt for lower back	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps	15	15-25	2011	3		1
			15	15-25	2011	3		2
			15	15-25	2011	3		3
			15	15-25	2011	2		4
A2	30 degree incline DB bench press	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	45	15-25	2111	3		1
			45	15-25	2111	3		2
			45	15-25	2111	3		3
			45	15-25	2111	2		4
B1	Overhand lat pulldown	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	15	15-25	2011	3		1
			15	15-25	2011	3		2
			15	15-25	2011	3		3
			15	15-25	2011	2		4
B2	Standing KB lat raise	Last set AMRAP with cheat reps, at least 25 cheat reps.	45	15-25	2011	3		1
			45	15-25	2011	3		2
			45	15-25	2011	3		3
			45	15-25	2011	2		4
C1	Standing 2 hand DB hammer curl	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	15	15-25	2111	3		1
			15	15-25	2111	3		2
			15	15-25	2111	3		3
			15	15-25	2111	2		4
C2	Flat DB skullcrusher	Last set AMRAP + partials and cheat reps + 60s loaded stretch	45	15-25	2111	3		1
			45	15-25	2111	3		2
			45	15-25	2111	3		3
			45	15-25	2111	2		4
D1	Cannonball leg press (Feet low, press off toes, quad focus)	Last set AMRAP	15	25-35	2010	3		1
			15	25-35	2010	3		2
			15	25-35	2010	3		3
			15	25-35	2010	2		4
D2	Smith machine split squat	Steps per leg - Rest as long as you need to after first leg	45	15-25	2010	3		
			45	15-25	2010	3		
			45	15-25	2010	3		
			45	15-25	2010	2		

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DAY-7 THURSDAY

EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS
Neutral hammer grip pull down	Cluster set. Pick your 15RM roughly. Look to fail in last couple of sets getting 3-4 reps for a total of 22-24 reps. USE A TIMER IN FRONT OF YOU FOR STRICT REST. 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
		10	4	2010	6		4
Standing BB shoulder press in rack	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
		10	4	2010	6		4
DB press	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure in lengthened range at the end + loaded stretch for 60s 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
		10	4	2010	6		4
Standing DB bent over row	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch for 60s. 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
		10	4	2010	6		4
Leg press, high foot	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch for 60s 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
		10	4	2010	6		4
Seated leg curl	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch for 60s 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
		10	4	2010	6		4
Seated calf raise While resting do 25 tibialis raises	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end + loaded stretch for 60s 90s rest between rounds	10	4	2212	6		1
		10	4	2212	6 - 2 rounds		2
		10	4	2212	6 - 2 rounds		3
		10	4	2212	6		4
Optional abs of choice	90s rest between rounds	10	4	2010	6		1
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
		10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
		10	4	2010	6		4

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FABIO BONNANO COACHING

DAY-8 FRIDAY

REF	EXERCISE	EXERCISE NOTES	REST	REPS	TEMPO	SETS	DATE	WEEKS
A1	Heel elevated BB front squat	Cluster set. Pick your 15RM roughly. Look to fail in last couple of sets getting 3-4 reps for a total of 22-24 reps. USE A TIMER IN FRONT OF YOU FOR STRICT REST	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
B1	BB RDL	Cluster set, bottom half partials at the end + loaded stretch	10	4	2110	6		1
			10	4	2110	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2110	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2110	6		4
C1	Lying leg curl	Cluster set. Last set AMRAP + bottom half partials + 60s loaded stretch	10	4	2011	6		1
			10	4	2011	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2011	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2011	6		4
D1	Leg press calf raise	Cluster set + 60s loaded stretch at the end	10	4	2212	6		1
			10	4	2212	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2212	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2212	6		4
E1	DB pullover	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end. 90s rest between rounds.	10	4	2010	6		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6		4
F1	Standing DB lat raise	Cluster set. Bottom half partial reps to failure at the end, at least 25	10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		4
G1	Standing BB curl	Cluster set. Partial reps to failure at the end	10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		1
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		2
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		3
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		4
H1	Close grip bench press	Cluster set. AMRAP to technical failure at the end	10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		
			10	4	2010	6 - 2 rounds		

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