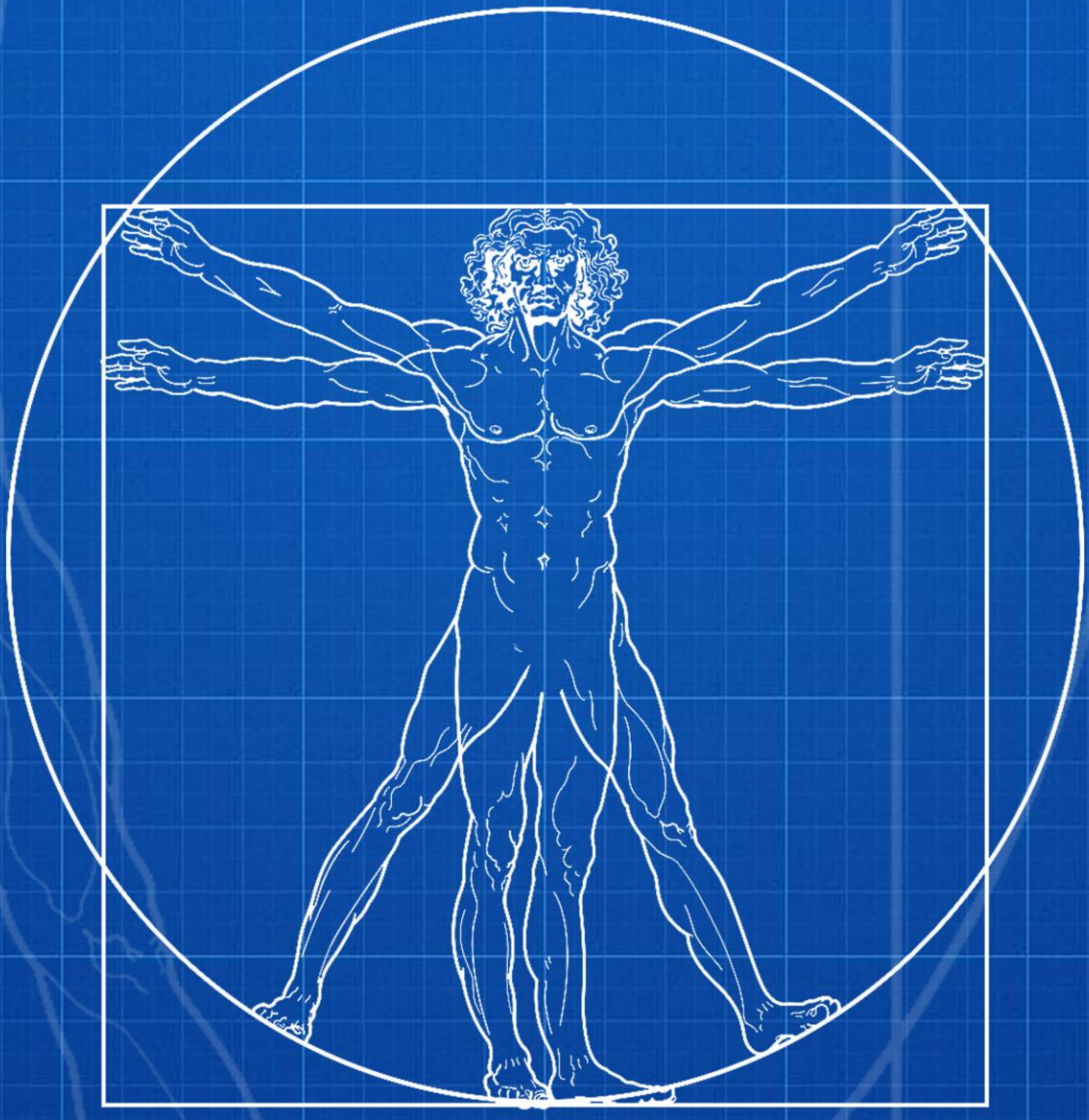
CHAD HOWSE'S

THE PERFECT BODY BLUEPRINT



THE STRATEGIC GUIDE TO BUILDING THE PERFECT MUSCLE

Contents

Introduction

One of my favorite books is *Essentialism,* by Greg McKeown. It's a great read, more of a reminder than a mind-blower, but it's a book I highly recommend. The premise follows the Stoic philosophy that a man's mind should only be fixed on one thing at a time. To focus on more than one thing is not only useless, but it does more harm in the long run.

The key is to focus on *the right thing* during your *best* hours of the day. Anyway, it's a "life" book and a business book, but also a book that fits with this program.

If you want to build the perfect muscle, you need to focus on that muscle for an extended period of time *before* moving on to the next one.

In the world of training what are you aspiring to achieve if it's not perfection? Why would you want mediocrity or an average body when you can create perfection?

With balanced routines and programs (basically every other program out there), you focus on building the main part of each muscle. But each muscle is made of multiple angles and often multiple other muscles – take the back, for instance, not only do your lats have different portions that require different grips and movements, but so do your traps and your lower back.

Thus, if you want to build your *best* body, the path cannot be balance, it must be precision. You have to focus on one thing at a time and then go from there. Not only that, you have to train your muscle to continually grow and get stronger even though you're specializing your focus.

Enter a strange method called *specialization* and the *Perfect Body Blueprint.*

Specialization Training 101

You've often heard that in order to build your biceps, you'll need nothing more than to perform pull ups and chin ups while also getting stronger in your pulling movements (i.e. bent barbell rows, seated rows, lat pulldowns, etc.)

This is also said to be true with pretty much any other muscle group. You've probably heard that if you want to build bigger hamstrings or glutes, you simply have to squat more. Or perhaps you've been told that building bigger shoulders is simply a matter of getting stronger in the overhead press.

You get the idea.

In my experience this serves to be true for the overwhelming majority of the population. Most guys can follow a training program based on the main compound lifts and make astronomical changes in their physique without performing a single biceps curl or leg extension.

You'll also find guys, for example, with a remarkable genetic ability to pack mass onto certain muscles with very little effort. We've all seen the guys who hardly squat and yet walk around with legs fit for a lineman.

Of course, however, those (the genetically gifted) are the outliers.

But like the overwhelming majority of guys who can build a solid physique with just compound lifts, the genetically gifted guys may also end up with weak or lagging muscle groups.

Have you noticed this in your own physique?

Perhaps you find it effortless to add mass to your chest but your triceps (or lack thereof) are keeping you from filling in a small shirt sleeve?

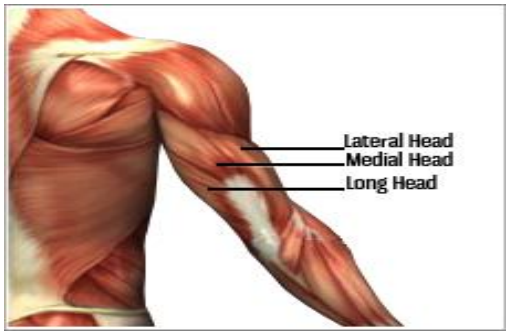
Fact is, when it comes to sculpting a well-rounded and proportionate physique, specialization training is the fastest solution.

This is true for a few reasons.

1. Proper Planes of Movement

For starters, muscles are compartmentalized and have different heads. And if you fail to include enough variety for a given muscle-group, you won't maximize the stimulation of all of its fibers.

Let's look at the triceps for example.



Made up of 3 heads that all fire when the elbow is extended, you can't necessarily isolate one of the heads over the other. However, performing an overhead movement will emphasis the long head of the triceps a bit more while the medial and lateral head are better targeted when the elbows are close to the body.

2. Recovery Resources

If you want a big chest (or a bigger arms, increased bench, or a higher vertical), then you have to focus on that ONE goal if you want optimal results. Don't make the

mistake of trying to maintain volume on all different muscles during this program. You want all your resources (training, nutrition, recovery) to go toward the ultimate goal of bringing up lagging muscle-groups.

Maintenance Training: This program includes separate full-body training days in order to maintain strength in all other muscle groups.

3. Slingshot Hypertrophy

Slingshot hypertrophy or super-compensation is a 3 step process.

The first step is the application of a training or loading stimulus and the body's reaction it (i.e. fatigue, tiring, etc.). When we're training a specific muscle-group 2-3 times per week, there is a decrease in performance due to this reaction.

Step 2 is the recovery phase. This can be a lighter training session, a recovery session, an active rest or, my personal preference, a back off/deload week. As a result of the recovery period, the energy stores and performance will return to the baseline.

Step 3 is the super-compensation phase. This is the adaptive slingshot above the baseline; it is described as a slingshot response because the body is essentially coming back from the low point of greatest fatigue.

In laymen's terms, we hammer away at a specific muscle group for 4-6 weeks. At this point you'll begin to notice a slight decrease in performance. This means we have successfully pushed the muscle into a state of overreaching. This becomes the perfect opportunity for a back off week or recovery phase where we restore our energy, and adapt to the high training load of the previous (4-6) weeks. The body then compensates to ensure it's ready to handle another extreme training phase by building bigger and stronger (insert muscle you hammered for the last 4-6 weeks).

Let's get started!

At this point you should have a pretty good idea as to why specialization training is necessary for those looking to achieve a well-rounded physique.

You probably also know exactly what muscle-groups (choose 2) you will be focusing on during your first specialization block.

Next I would like to explain exactly how you will be following the program to ensure the best results possible.

I'll also go over all of the main principles of the training to give you a better understanding of why and how it all works.

Do not skip to the training just yet!

How to Sculpt Your Physique

This program is designed quite differently than most of the other specialization workouts out there. We've created this training in a way that will allow you to really personalize your workout to your specific goals. For example, instead of structuring the workouts by combining agonist and antagonist muscle-groups, we've split each muscle-group up individually so that you can put it together in direct relation to your goals.

Instead of forcing you to specialize your arms, for example, we understand that you may already have well developed biceps and may simply want to focus on bringing up your triceps.

The same goes for your legs. If you are quad dominant, then perhaps focusing on your hamstrings, along with another lagging muscle-group, may make more sense than specializing your legs in general.

With that in mind, let's jump in to the meat and potatoes of this chapter and walk you through setting up and executing your training.

Step 1

Choose two specialization muscle-groups to start with.

The 2 muscle-groups you choose should either be 1) your visibly weakest muscles or 2) muscle groups that you need/want to improve for sports performance or any other non-related purpose.

Step 2

Decide the order in which you will train each muscle-group.

For example, if you've chosen to specialize your chest and quads, then you have the option to:

1. Start your training with chest and end with quads (or vice versa).

2. Rotate starting muscle-groups (i.e. Chest/Quads on Monday, Quads/Chest on Wednesday, etc.)
3. Rotate muscle groups during training (i.e. Exercise 1 Chest, Exercise 1 Quads, Exercise 2 Chest, Exercise 2 Quads, etc.)

Please DO NOT Overcomplicate This Step!

Step 3

Get Started!

I don't care what day it is today. Whether it's Monday or Thursday, start now!

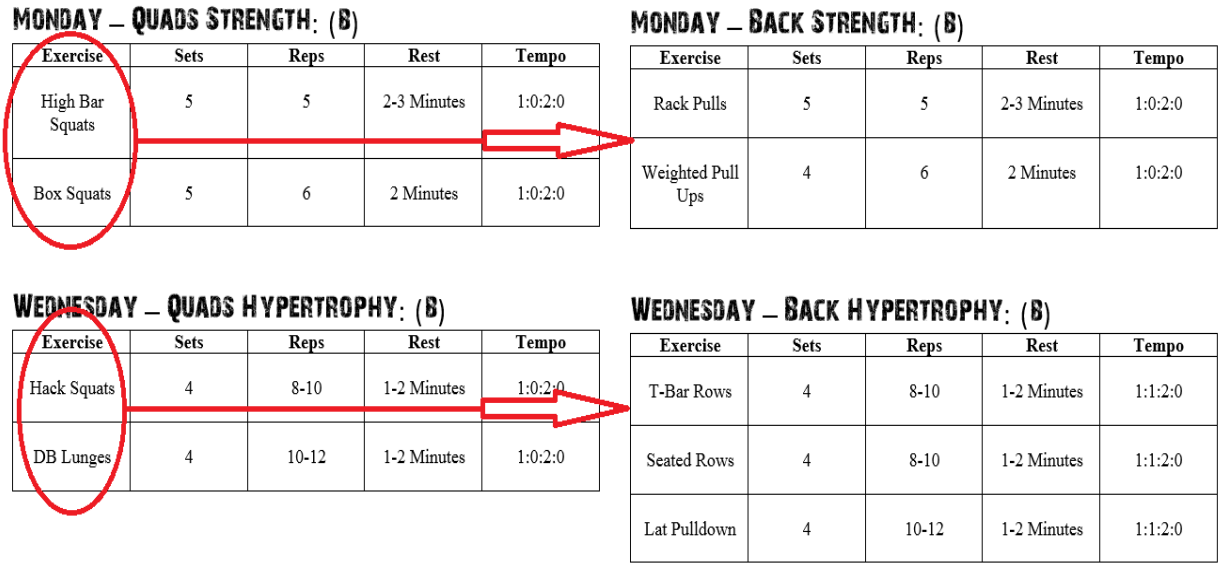
If you've already trained today, start tomorrow.

You purchased this program because you had a goal and it's (this program) going to help you achieve it. No sense in putting it off, period.

Following Your Workout Program

Before we jump into the fun stuff, let me quickly give you a visual of how you'll be following your training program(s).

In the example image below, you'll see your quad training on the left and you'll see your back training on the right.



MONDAY – QUADS STRENGTH: (B)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest	Tempo
High Bar Squats	5	5	2-3 Minutes	1:0:2:0
Box Squats	5	6	2 Minutes	1:0:2:0

MONDAY – BACK STRENGTH: (B)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest	Tempo
Rack Pulls	5	5	2-3 Minutes	1:0:2:0
Weighted Pull Ups	4	6	2 Minutes	1:0:2:0

WEDNESDAY – QUADS HYPERTROPHY: (B)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest	Tempo
Hack Squats	4	8-10	1-2 Minutes	1:0:2:0
DB Lunges	4	10-12	1-2 Minutes	1:0:2:0

WEDNESDAY – BACK HYPERTROPHY: (B)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest	Tempo
T-Bar Rows	4	8-10	1-2 Minutes	1:1:2:0
Seated Rows	4	8-10	1-2 Minutes	1:1:2:0
Lat Pulldown	4	10-12	1-2 Minutes	1:1:2:0

Begin with which ever muscle-group you chose in step 2 to begin with. Perform each exercise for the prescribed sets and reps.

Once you've completed your quad exercises, move on to your back training and continue.

Note: Revert to step 2 for other training structure options.

Antagonist Paired Sets

Another way to structure your workouts if, and only if, you choose agonist/antagonist muscle-groups are antagonist paired sets.

These are essentially just super-set workouts that target the opposing muscle groups simultaneously (i.e. biceps/triceps, hamstring/quads, etc.)

Aside from increased training density, antagonist paired sets have been shown to provide a number of benefits.

"*Recent evidence suggests that exercising the antagonist musculature acutely enhances subsequent performance for the agonist musculature.*"

Antagonist Pairs:

- Biceps/Triceps
- Chest/Back
- Quads/Hamstrings

How to Perform Antagonist Paired Sets

Combine two exercises and perform them back to back with very little to no rest in between.

Once you've performed both exercises back to back, that is one set. Once the set is complete, take a standard break and repeat.

Example:

A1. Chest Dips x 8
B1. Pull Ups x 8

Perform 8 repetitions of chest dips, immediately upon completion, jump right into your pull ups. Perform 8 reps on your pull ups (this is one set) and then rest for the prescribed rest period.

There has even been studies done on antagonist paired sets that show they are a great form of active recovery (i.e. biceps are in active recovery while triceps are working). Another benefit would be that the antagonist muscle cannot aid in the lift due to pre-exhaustion resulting in higher muscle activity.

Understanding Rep Tempo

Rep Tempo: *The speed with which you perform a repetition.*

The 3 Components of Rep Tempo

Concentric: When you lift a weight against the force of gravity.

Eccentric: When you lower the weight in the direction of gravity.

Isometric: The portion of the lift at starting point or ending point where the weight is not moving.

For Example, the concentric portion of the bench press happens when you are pushing the weight up and away from your chest. Lowering the bar back down towards your chest constitutes the eccentric. The isometric contraction happens at both the top and bottom of this movement when the weight is stationary.

Rep Tempo in Layman's

MONDAY – CHEST STRENGTH: (A)

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest	Tempo
Bench Press	5	5	2-3 Minutes	1:0:2:0
Incline DB Press	4	6	2 Minutes	1:0:2:0

1:0:2:0 = Concentric: Isometric: Eccentric: Isometric

On the bench press, using this tempo would mean you're pressing the bar in 1 second, 0 pause at the top of the lift, lowering the bar under tension for 2 seconds, and 0 pause at the bottom of the lift.

Progression Practices

Progressive Overload: *This is the gradual increase of stress placed upon the body during exercise training. This component is recognized as a fundamental principle for success in fitness training.*

If you have ever looked at any of my programs, you will notice that performance based training is a staple in my routines. Not because I am obsessed with my getting better (which is totally fine if you are), but because increasing your performance is the ONLY way to yield significant results.

A common goal for anyone following a fitness training program is to increase strength or muscle size. In order to achieve new results, the muscles need to be challenged, which stimulates the natural adaptive processes of the body, which develops to handle the new demands placed on it. If you fail to challenge the muscle, you will fail to stimulate the adaptive response.

Progressive Overload in Layman's Terms

When you put stress on your muscles from a weight lifting session, your body's natural response is to want to create larger and stronger muscles in order to handle the stress the next time around. If you walk into the gym on your next scheduled training day and perform the same exact exercises using the same amount of stress, your body will find no reason to change because it has already adapted and has failed to be challenged.

How do we assure our body is challenged enough to respond with growth?

Simply continue to add more stress to the muscle than the body is used to. Naturally it will attempt to build larger and stronger muscle in hopes to handle the new stress. Like I mentioned before, your main focus when you step foot in the gym should be to outperform your last performance by increasing volume, intensity, or both.

How to Progress In the Gym

- Increase the amount of repetitions without sacrificing the amount of weight used
- Increase the amount of sets performed
- Increase the amount of weight used without sacrificing the repetitions or sets

In order to simplify the process of increasing performance, we must track our workouts and bring our previous workout notes with us to the gym in order to ensure we are increasing stimulus.

Always Keep Track Of…

1. The workout performed
2. The amount of weight you are working with
3. The amount of repetitions performed per set
4. The amount of sets performed

Once your training session is over and you have collected all the information needed in your workout log, it is time to add up your workload.

Set	Volume	Workload
Set 1	135 x 10	1,350 lbs
Set 2	135 x 8	1,080 lbs
Set 3	135 x 8	1,080 lbs
Set 4	135 x 6	810 lbs
		Total Load: 4,320 lbs

So long as that total workload is increasing, you're progressing.

Progressive Overload with Single-Joint Movements

Adding 100 pounds to your bench press, over the course of a year, as a beginner, isn't easy but it's certainly possible. Adding 100 pounds to your biceps curls, however, is not likely. This is true for a couple of reasons. Number 1, your chest, triceps, and shoulders, working together are far stronger than your biceps alone. Secondly, the rate of progression would simply be too fast for anyone to achieve, naturally.

Here's what I mean.

If you bench pressed 100 lbs at the beginning of your training career, and managed to increase it to 200 lbs over the course of 1 year, that would make for a 50% increase in your bench. If you, on the other hand, began with 10 pound dumbbells (20 lbs total) and ended the year using 60 pound dumbbells (120 lbs total), that would make for a 500% increase.

Make sense?

Single-Joint Movement Progression Scheme

1. Choose a weight you can perform for x amount of sets, for the prescribed reps.
2. Once you are able to complete every set for the prescribed reps, aim to hit 2 additional reps, using the same weight.
3. Once you are able to complete every set for the prescribed reps (+2), increase the weight by 5-10 lbs.
4. Perform x sets for the prescribed reps using the new weight and repeat steps 2-4.

Single Joint Movement Progression Example:

Biceps Curls 4 x 8

Day 1: 20 lbs x 4 x 8
Day 2: 20 lbs x 4 x 10
Day 3: 25 lbs x 4 x 8
Day 4: 25 lbs x 4 x 10

Note: The progression may not be linear but as long as the workload is increasing, you're on the right track.

The Mechanisms of Muscle Growth

Once you look at your training guides, you'll notice that they're broken down into 3 different stimuluses. You have your strength (or heavy days), hypertrophy (or moderate intensity days), and metabolic stress (or light days).

Two Concerns You May Have Are:

1. If I train a muscle-group 3x per week, won't I overtrain?
2. I am not interested in gaining strength, why can't I just train in the traditional rep ranges for growth (i.e. 6-12)?

In regards to overtraining, I'll talk a bit more about that in the next section of this guide.

For now, let's stick to the rep ranges/intensities prescribed in the program.

If you look at each individual training day (i.e. strength, hypertrophy, metabolic stress), you'll notice that each one requires you to train in a distinct rep range. The daily changes in rep range then require a daily change in intensity. This is a commonly used, non-linear periodization strategy known as D.U.P.

Intensity: *customarily expressed as a percentage of 1RM and equates to the number of repetitions that can be performed with a given weight.*

For example:

When looking at a squat on a heavy day, you might be prescribed 5 reps per set. This will require that you use a load that is 80-85% of your 1RM. When squatting on a hypertrophy day you may be asked to perform sets of 8 and thus the training load should be lighter (70-75%).

D.U.P. or Daily Undulating Periodization: *using different loads, reps, and sets in a resistance training program on different days of the week.*

The Research: In 2002, Rhea et al. showed that DUP is superior to linear periodization. The study was done with 20 trained males who had at least 2 years of training experience.

They did followed a DUP program for 12 weeks and trained 3x per week. The DUP group gained almost twice as much strength when compared to the linear group.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11991778

Now the fun stuff…

3 Mechanisms of Hypertrophy

	Mechanical Stress (1-5 Reps)	Muscle Damage (6-12 Reps)	Metabolic Stress (15+ Reps)
Strength	XXXXX	XX	
Muscle Tension	XX	XXXXX	XXX
Muscular Stamina		XX	XXXXX

The chart above illustrates each mechanism of muscle growth, where it is achieved (rep range and intensity), and the adaptations associated.

For example, training for mechanical stress (heavy weight, low reps) will yield a significant amount of strength, but won't do much for increasing muscular stamina or endurance. On the other hand, metabolic stress does a great deal for muscular endurance and very little for overall strength.

Mechanical Stress: Mechanically induced tension produced both by force generation and stretch.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12023866

Muscle Damage: localized damage to muscle tissue which, under certain conditions, is theorized to generate a hypertrophic response.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12394471

Metabolic Stress: a result of the accumulation of metabolites, particularly lactate, and acute muscle hypoxia associated with resistance training may serve to further heighten metabolic buildup and, hence, stimulate hypertrophic adaptations.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23338987

Each mechanism plays a unique role in how we adapt to its stimulus. But the remarkable thing, in my opinion, is how each mechanism aids in progression with the next. For example; mechanical stress will help increase overall strength. Increasing your absolute strength will then allow you to lift heavier in your hypertrophy or metabolic stress training. On the other end, the increased muscle endurance caused by the lighter load, metabolic stress training will allow for increased stamina during your strength and hypertrophy training.

Overtraining/Training Frequency

Overtraining: *a point where a person may have a decrease in performance and plateauing as a result from failure to consistently perform at a certain level or training load exceeds their recovery capacity.*

Training Frequency: *the number of times per week for training a muscle group*

When it comes to achieving a well-rounded physique, frequency is one of the key factors for new muscle growth. Without adequate frequency, we are leaving a lot of room for growth on the table. Despite what the workout routines in bodybuilding magazines might suggest, breaking your workouts down into one training session per week, per muscle, is not going to produce optimal results. This is simply due to two major factors. These are also the two reasons why higher frequency training (if done correctly) is far superior to the modern, over emphasized, body part split.

1. Muscle Protein Synthesis

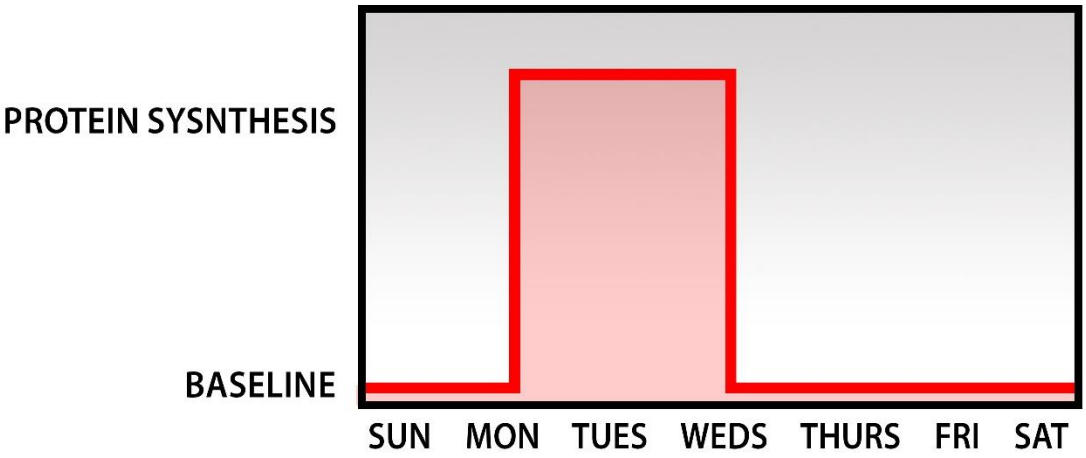
Muscle Protein Synthesis is critical to the body's ongoing growth, repair, and maintenance of its skeletal muscle.

In any trainee, muscle protein synthesis is related to how the muscles are being exercised. Other than the ongoing repair and maintenance of existing muscle tissues that may be damaged through the course of daily living, new muscle will not be created without muscular activity (weight training). This is a prerequisite of meaningful muscle development, built on protein synthesis.

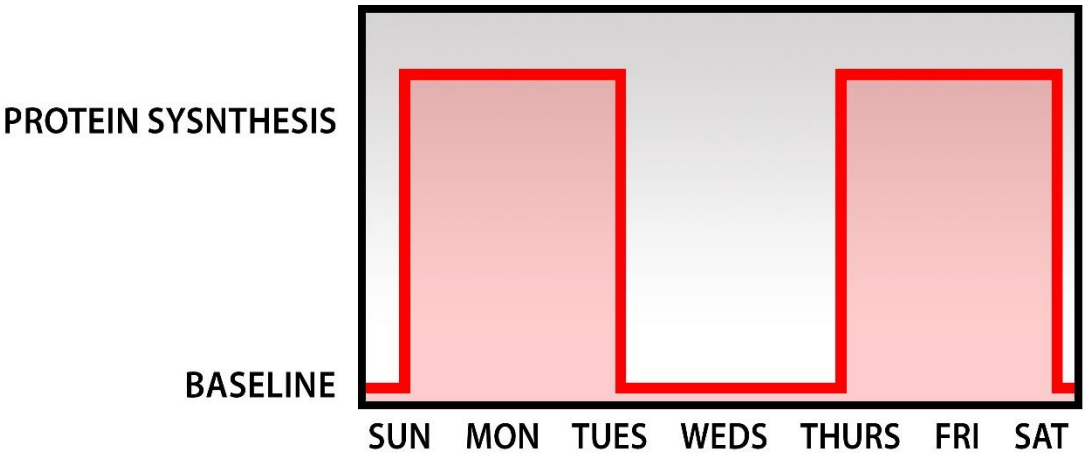
All forms of physical activity will direct stress into a muscle. For example, with distance running, the stresses are cumulative, the combined effect of repetitive movements that are at a relatively lower level of intensity. On the other hand, activities that involve explosive and powerfully focused movements, the forces directed against the muscle are much more significant, and they occur over a much faster period of time.

In each situation, the muscle will naturally break down, a process known as "catabolism." The repair of the damaged muscle is "anabolism," the building up and the growth of the existing and previously damaged fiber. Protein synthesis is the mechanism by which the body affects this repair and muscle growth: as a very general rule of thumb, when the body synthesizes more protein than it breaks down, muscle growth occurs.

Elevated MPS Through Weight Training



The chart above illustrates elevated rates of protein synthesis in an individual who trains his chest (for example) once per week. MPS is elevated for 24-48 hours and then drops back down to baseline for the rest of the training week.



This chart illustrates elevated MPS in an individual who trains his chest twice per week. In this case, the trainee is doubling the amount of time he/she is spending in an anabolic state (building muscle).

2. The Repeated Bout Effect

Are you training your chest once per week?

Do they still get extremely sore following your training?

I am sorry to inform you that as an intermediate trainee, if you have muscle groups that are still getting extremely sore, it's not because you've had a great session and introduced a new stimulus (although this could prove true). In most cases, this soreness is due to a slow and inefficient recovery.

After performing an unaccustomed eccentric exercise and exhibiting severe soreness, the muscle rapidly adapts to reduce further damage from the same exercise. However, if this is not the case, then your body is simply not adapting to the stress. If it is not adapting, not only will it become harder to increase your intensity, but new muscle will come much slower (if at all).

In the past you've probably been lead to believe that, if you train a muscle-group more than 1-2 times per week, you'll overtrain and ultimately end up back in the same skinny frame you started with.

This, however, has been debunked in numerous scientific studies.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12641640

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10222539

Science has demonstrated, what they call, The Repeated Bout Effect.

Repeated Bout Effect: *the adaptation whereby a single bout of eccentric exercise protects against muscle damage from subsequent eccentric bouts*

Although this effect does still require an adequate rest period between bouts, training more frequently (using practical programming) will increase your ability to recover and adapt. More efficient recovery and adaptation makes for extended progression without a plateau, strength increases, and more overall muscle growth.

Back-Off Week

What is a back-off week?

It is a planned reduction in volume and/or intensity, usually for one cycle of your training split, whose purpose is to allow the body to dissipate accumulated fatigue, allow a full recovery, and prepare you for further gains. Also, remember that weight training does not just tax your muscles. It also puts stress on your joints, ligaments, connective tissues, and central nervous system.

Why Back-Off?

- In order to repair ligament, tendons, joints, and tissues.
- To allow your Central Nervous System to recover.
- To avoid overtraining.

When to Back-Off?

In the context of this program, in order to achieve the super-compensation effect we discussed in the Specialization Training section of this guide, one should back-off for 1 week following your 6 week training cycle.

This is where step three of slingshot hypertrophy occurs. It is during this time of active recovery that your body restores energy, and adapts to the high training load of the previous training cycle. The body then compensates to ensure it's ready to handle another extreme training phase by building bigger and stronger muscle. The muscle(s) you chose to specialize will benefit the greatest.

With that said, there are outliers. Guys who may not be able to run this style of training for an entire 6 weeks straight. This is perfectly fine, however, if you notice any of the symptoms below, they're a good indicator that it's time to begin your back-off week.

- You feel tired and not primed to train.
- Your lifts are not increasing (or even decreasing).
- Your tendons, joints, or ligaments are achy.

How do I back-off?

In this program, the back-off week is extremely simple.

Take the maintenance (a) and maintenance (b) workouts seen in your training guides, and lay them out for the week as seen in the chart below.

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
Rest	Maint. (a)	Rest	Maint. (b)	Rest	Maint. (a)	Rest

Option I

- Follow this workout routine as laid out in the guide, but decrease the weight used to previously by about 50-60%.

For example: If you were bench pressing 250lbs for your working sets, knock it down to 125lbs during the back-off week.

Option II

- Use the same weight you normally would, but decrease the reps performed by to 50-60%.

For example: If the program prescribed 5 x 10 (on a regular training day), then 5 x 5 would be your back-off volume.

Option III

- Use the same weight you normally would, but decrease the sets performed by to 50-60%.

For example: If the program prescribed 5 x 10 (on a regular training day), then 2 x 10 would be your back-off volume.

Option IV

- Use light weight and focus on refining your form and technique. (One of my favorite methods.)

Enjoy the Gains!