

## 24 weeks to Battering Ram Pushing Power!

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Over the past couple of issues we've been discussing strategies for making our mortal foe, homeostasis, yield to our every whim. We learned how to conquer him even when he adorned himself in the heaviest of armors! We've got him on the run, but like the coward he is, he keeps finding a way to guard himself from growth and continues to keep one step ahead of our best training efforts.

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### Lay siege to the castle! No escape for the walled-in Homeostasis!

Medieval castles often faced a variety of threats from attacking armies, and Middle Age architecture was always pushed to adapt new technologies to better defend the walls. The popular vision of medieval battles on open battlefields, complete with horses charging and banners flying were more the exception than the rule. It took large numbers of soldiers to storm a castle. Attacking armies used malicious medieval weapons when trying to take a Middle Age castle by force.

### Our Weapon of unstoppable force

One of the key pieces of weaponry for taking a castle by storm was the [Battering Ram](#).

The battering ram was a formidable weapon that could tear down the strongest and thickest of walls. It was used to shake, perforate, and batter down the walls of besieged cities.

Its main attribute of design consisted of a *large beam*, made of the trunk of a thick, gigantic tree.

To one end was fastened a mass of bronze or iron that resembled in its form the *head of a ram*.

The use of this machine was further aided by placing the frame in which it was *suspended upon wheels*.

### Unstoppable!

There was no tower so strong, no wall so thick, as to resist the force of this machine, if its blows were continued long enough.

The beam of the ram was often of great length and could range from 80, 100, or even 120 feet.

A hundred men, or even a greater number, were sometimes employed to strike with the beam.

The more force they could muster, amidst continuous barrage of arrows, smoldering hot oil and heavy boulders, would determine the ultimate damage that would befall the castle gates.

**You will be like the Battering Ram of the days of Yore!**

OK, I'll admit I have a "thing" for medieval times.

But it is my sincere goal to make your pushing muscles a literal battering Ram in the gym! An unstoppable force that can break the walls down!

After these 24 weeks, our homeostatic enemy will no longer be able to hide behind the walls of catabolism and stubborn growth. You will literally rupture his defenses!

*Like the battering ram...*

You will form your shoulders into solid beams of oak, as the centerpiece of your pushing power.

Your chest will become like the wheels of a mighty chariot, rolling into battle and stomping over any wall that resists you.

Finally, your Pushing powers will be topped off with the might of your triceps. Like the mighty Ram's head, which will crush all that oppose.

With that in mind, let's get the wheels rolling and start discussing the first part of our war plans...developing a Chest that will make the enemy give up and lower the drawbridge at the very sight of your coming!

## **8 weeks to a Bigger Chest Part II**

### **Setting the scene - Strategies for Induced Hypertrophy**

"You reap what you sow"

This quote, made famous in Jacob's masterpiece, X-ray Vision part II article, says more than a mouth full, in fact it speaks volumes! This quote can literally be applied to every area of your life! But this passage can be taken to the bank when you're investing into becoming a bodybuilder.

When you break it all down, bodybuilding is a one man or woman sport. You may have advisors and trainers, but when it comes down to it, at the end of the day, you literally will reap what you sow in this business. Keep that in mind as you prepare to head into the gym, bake in the kitchen or hit the sack. You are the ultimate controller of how much effort you put into it. No one can make you push harder, no one can make you block out the pain, no one can make you eat that little extra

protein, no one can make you sleep a little longer.... you are the manager of your free will.

If you put in a half way workout, you will get a half way chest, but I assure you if you put 200% into these workouts and in the other areas of your bodybuilding life you will be very pleased with the results!

Prepare to be on the warpath with these routines. I really want you to go into the gym with the mentality of battle. We all have our rituals for psyching up for the gym. Jacob discussed several awesome methods in his X-ray vision series, which are located in the September and November issues of Beyond Failure magazine.

I like to psych myself up with watching my favorite pro body builders workout on video, with the TV volume on mute and old school Metallica blaring in the background! But whatever your personal method for getting yourself pumped-up, save it for just your chest workout over the next 8 weeks.

I also recommend supplementing with 200 mg of caffeine before each workout for added endurance and energy. However, for this supplement to be effective, do not drink any caffeinated beverages throughout the rest of the week, and don't use any thermogenics for any other workouts.

Do whatever it takes to wage war against your body. Thirst for pain, beg for brutality, and long for the battle scars. Endure more pain than your current threshold can handle. And most importantly learn to like it!

These series of workouts will add a whole new dimension to your upper body, but you have to **push harder** than you ever have before. Go deeper in your mind than you thought possible. Bodybuilding is mostly mental so be prepared to reach further into yourself than you ever imagined.

### **Don't take any prisoners in these workouts!**

These workouts are going to revolve around the prioritization principle. This simply states that if you want to focus on a certain muscle group prioritize it above all the rest!

I'll give specific ways to prioritize for each muscle group as the series progresses. But for this month our main focus is chest.

First off, I want to discuss the layout of the next 8 weeks.

The chest muscles respond best to heavy weights and so we will be using this ideology a great deal in this series, and these workouts are specifically designed to allow you to do just that.

We will accomplish this through a specific pattern of order.

### **Stabilizer muscles**

Stabilizer muscles are used in balancing free-weight exercises.

They are essentially responsible for coordination during a free-weight exercise, particularly during exercises like squats, dead lifts, and presses.

They help keep the bones and joints in a secure position while the prime moving muscles extend and flex the body area being trained. The stabilizer muscles help align and maintain joint integrity consistently through the normal range of motion as well as providing balance to the athlete during the lift.

After any heavy free-weight movement, the stabilizer muscles are very fatigued and continuing with another free weight movement can hinder the amount of weight you would be able to use. It's our goal to go as heavy as humanly possible for this series, so for our purposes of inducing hypertrophy in the pectoral region this approach will hinder our progress. So...

For this series we will start with a free-weight exercise, and follow that with a machine or cable exercise. This will allow us to go heavy and stay heavy throughout the entire workout! If you've never tried this shocking method you'll be pleasantly surprised how much heavier you can go through your entire workout with this approach.

So in this sample workout, we'll start with a free-weight exercise, followed by a machine exercise. To finish the workout we'll follow up the non-stabilizer (machine or cable) exercise with a stabilizer (free-weight) exercise.

What this does is allow the stabilizer muscles to "rest" during the machine exercise and be more refreshed for the following free-weight exercise. Again, for the purpose of pushing maximum weight throughout the routine.

Sometimes the workouts will start with a non-stabilizer exercise. That's not important. The most important aspect of this strategy is that we won't let the stabilizer muscles hinder us from pushing extreme poundages throughout the entire workout.

## **Rest**

Now we come to the other hardcore aspect of this 8-week cycle, the rest period for the chest. Your chest will be fried after the first three exercises in these routines. If it isn't then you need to work harder. You'll require a rest period in between the third and fourth exercises in order to get maximum results from these routines.

I recommend working a smaller muscle group during your rest time. I suggest biceps, calves, or abs. Personally, when prioritizing chest I like to work biceps in between chest, but that choice is up to you.

Basically, for this 8 cycle, you'll be doing 3 chest exercises, rest, and then 1 final chest exercise. If you chose to prioritize by doing chest on a day totally by itself, I recommend doing your first 3 exercises in the day, then come in at night for your final sets of the fourth exercise.

Or, you could do it all in one session and just wait around the gym for your final set. That's fine, but give yourself at least a 30-minute break before doing your fourth exercise.

### **Summing up the battle plan, a layout for the basic workout...**

The layout of a typical workout will look like this:

Exercise 1: Stabilizer exercise- Barbell Bench Press

Exercise 2: Non-stabilizer exercise- Machine flys

Exercise 3: Stabilizer exercise- Incline Barbell Press

Rest Period -

Option A. Do the first three exercises in the morning, and then do exercise 4 later that day or night.

Option B. Work a smaller muscle group for 30-45 minutes or just rest for 30-45 minutes.

Exercise 4: Non-stabilizer exercise- Machine Press

For this series to yield maximum results, I suggest separating chest as the only major muscle group you work during that day during your 5 to 7 day cycle. In other words don't do a chest/ shoulder/ triceps day or a back/ chest day. If you work another muscle group on the same day as chest, pick a smaller one like biceps or abs.

You need to go into the gym with the mentality of destroying pectoral muscle fibers as your sole purpose for existing at that moment in time. Often times focusing on working two big muscle groups in the same workout session can get you out of that mentality.

In this series I'd like to see you work your chest every five days, but seven will be fine if you prefer that type of split.

### **Rest time between sets**

For this sequence of workouts we will be utilizing the following rest times between sets:

3-5 reps = 3-5 minutes

6-8 reps - 3 minutes

9-12 reps - 1-3 minutes

13-15 reps - 1 minute

15 -25 reps - 30 seconds to 1 minute

Everything above 25 reps is the same.

To read more about why these times are optimal for recovery between sets, read Jacob's muscle fiber article by [clicking here](#)

## May the force be with you!

Since we are discussing rest times, I also want to talk to you a little about the instinctive training principle. The instinct principle is just that; an intuition you start to build about your body as you become a more experienced athlete.

This "sense" can range from everything from the best time for your workouts, to, what we're concerned about, rest time between sets. I like to call it the force. Yeah, I'm a star wars fan too!

The above list is a great outline that Jacob provided based upon the fact of what muscle fibers tend to be stressed most during those particular repetition ranges. However, you can also go by your "gut" feeling after you've been training awhile. I hope that by the end of this 24 week period this instinctive feeling will grow stronger in you. If you stick to this guideline and follow the workouts I assure you it will.

By diving into heavier weights this sense will become much more acute in your mind and will develop much faster! I truly feel this "6<sup>th</sup> sense", if you will, is what separates the advanced from the intermediate body builder.

And this sixth sense never becomes so great that your instinct will someday "stop growing". As long as you body build you will continue to grow in these intuitions as there is a direct correlation between the instinctive training principle and experience in the sport.

Often times I will simply go by instinct as to when I'm ready to tackle the next set. However, if I'm in the real heavy stuff or lower rep ranges I tend to go more by the clock so I don't rush too fast into the next set. Whereas doing so can hinder my potential for completing that set.

## Warming-up

*"You can always rush a workout if you have to, but **never** rush a warm up!"*

Those are words to live by, my friends. It's simply not worth rushing a warm-up. You may not even get injured immediately if you do, but the damage from neglecting a thorough warm-up can accumulate.

Over time this can lead to strains, tears, and pulls. This in turn can mean lay-off periods from the gym and muscle atrophy (reduction).

It is definitely worth anyone's time to warm up good at the beginning of any routine with lighter sets and stretching.

I recommend 3 warm up sets of the same exercise we will begin each routine with. For example if we were starting with flat bench press. I'd recommend a extremely light set of maybe 15-20 reps, another warm-up set of 12 reps, followed by a semi-heavy warm up set of 6-7 reps. None of these warm-ups are to failure, but just

enough to prepare your muscles and nervous system for the strain they are about to endure.

Between warm-up sets and working sets, stretch and flex the muscle group you are working. This will lead to greater agility, better blood pumps (circulation), and increased muscle separation and hardness. All that from stretching? You bet. As you can see it's not worth skipping. Especially if you want maximum results from this 8-week cycle.

I suggest also doing some light front raises and lateral raises at the beginning of each of these routines as the deltoids are worked rather hard during any pressing exercise, and some light stretching for your triceps.

### **Dumbbell flys**

Dumbbell flys will play a huge role in this 8 week cycle. No exercise can add shape and peak to your pecs like flys. For this reason we will be utilizing them in all kinds of variations.

### Supinating flys

Let me begin by explaining how to do a proper Chest fly movement. At the bottom portion of the movement, the arms will be slightly bent. The dumbbells will be parallel to your body and slight below the top of your chest. Your arms will be extended (slightly bent) away from your body at a little less than a 90 degree angle. The next motion you make, as you begin to start the exercise, is to pull the dumbbells inward. You want to keep the bend in your elbows exactly the same. As you pull inward and keep the bend in your arms even, the dumbbells will begin arcing above you until they meet over the top of your chest. If you think of hugging a big tree, this sometimes helps to correctly perform the movement.

You should feel your pecs squeezing hard to "hug" the weight. This is what will make the difference between a dumbbell fly and a dumbbell flop! I like to hold the contraction for 1 or 2 seconds. This will singe your chest hairs off!

To add intensity to the exercise, you can rotate your hands(supinate) so that your pinkie fingers will be facing each other at the end of the movement and the flat sides of the dumbbell weights will be touching each other. This helps to supinate the pectorals, similar to twisting at the top of a bicep movement! The rotation takes place slowly and steadily until the movement is completed and starts about half way up. You then lower the weight just like you raised it until you are back to the starting position. This will really add peak on your pecs and helps extremely well with side chest poses! It also is a major enhancer of the hard to target middle pecs!

### **Bonus:**

Since we're talking about supination, and I recommend working biceps while you're resting after your third chest exercise, I just have to give you this little bicep trick! The bicep performs two jobs. One is to curl the arm but the other is to supinate the palm. So, in order to work the bicep completely, you want to make it do both jobs at once.

That just makes sense doesn't it? That's why you make your best progress when you do curls with the palm supinated. The straight bar doesn't supinate the palm but it at least it keeps the palm straight. The EZ curl bar doesn't even do that. It allows the palm to turn half way to the side. Yet we can actually do more weight with an Ez curl bar than with a straight bar. Why is that anyway? It's simple. The more you turn the wrist so the palm is facing down the more you activate the brachia radialis. This is good for building the top of the forearm but it's not so good for the bicep because now it doesn't have to do all the work.

If your goal is to build huge biceps here's a little trick you can use with the EZ curl bar that makes it even better than the straight bar...

Grab the EZ curl bar so the palms are pronated but supinated. It's a really awkward hand positioning, but man does it place stress right down on the lower bicep! **Merry Christmas!**

### Non-peak flys

Lie back on a flat bench holding the dumbbells straight above you with your arms fully extended, your palms should be facing each other. Now lower the dumbbells out and downward to either side using an arcing motion. Keep going until you feel a maximum stretch at the bottom. Bend your arms a bit as you perform this exercise so as not to stress your elbows. Bring the dumbbells to a complete stop when your pecs are completely stretched out. Now raise the weights back up along using the same arcing motion as when you lowered them.

Key: Stop when you are about 8-12 inches from a peak contraction, then lower again. The emphasis should be on the stretch!

### Neutral Non-grip flys

These are awesome for the outer pecs!

The motion is almost exactly the same on these as it is with the non-peak flys. Begin by lying on a flat bench, and placing your feet flat on the floor. Grasp a dumbbell in each hand and hold the weights straight up above your head. The dumbbells should face forward.

Lower the weights out and away until they are in line with your outer chest, keeping them balanced and under control. Let the dumbbells down as far as you can, being sure to get a full stretch in the pecs at the bottom. Now "hug" the weights back up and bring your arms straight Overhead and get a peak contraction on top. Remember to keep your elbows bent at the same angle throughout the entire rep. **Your arms move out and in, but your elbow angle always stays fixed.** Then repeat till you've finished your set. You should feel a strong contraction in your outer pecs as you ascend up from the negative position.

On these I like to stop when I am about 6 inches away from a peak contraction. So, they're still non-peak flys, but you'll get a little closer than the regular non-peak flys.

### **Forced Reps**

These workouts are designed so that you can do them alone, but if you have access to a partner; make extra efforts to do these workouts together. Forced reps will accelerate your growth big time. During these workouts, the theme is heavy. Heavy weights cause extreme hypertrophy in the chest, so always go as heavy as possible within the rep ranges I'll prescribe in the workouts. If you have access to a partner I recommend picking a weight that is just a little too heavy to complete the rep ranges I give maybe by just a rep or two. Then have your partner help you force out the remaining repetitions.

*(I suggest doing the first working set of any exercise to failure of your own accord. Don't do any forced out reps in the first working set, save that for the second, third, and fourth sets.)*

There is one instruction I wanted to add about forced reps:

To yield maximum results from them; you need to go ALL the way down. I see guys doing "forced" reps in the gym all the time, but only 10% doing them right! You need to go all the way to the full extent of the negative range of motion on a forced rep. Often times, myself included, we go heavy and almost forget our partner is there, and only focus on getting the weight back up, when the main point to a forced rep is to go beyond failure throughout the entire range of motion.

The idea behind a forced rep isn't to just "move" weight, its to totally fatigue your muscles on the negative portion of a rep, then have your partner help you out of the failure of that negative rep. This is no doubt highly painful, but gives highly desirable results! If you want maximum return on your forced rep investment, go slow on the negative and all the way down then have your partner aid you in getting out of the hole.

For example let's say the workout calls for 3 sets of incline barbell bench press. You would do the first set to failure without any help from your partner. Now on the second and third sets you would implement the forced rep principle.

As you hit failure and begin the forced reps, you would go all the way down on the incline press until the bar just touched your chest then have your partner help you force out the rest of the rep. Now when I say touch I don't mean bounce the barbell off your chest like you see some gym morons do! LOL What I mean is that the barbell should just barely brush against your chest before you begin the ascent back up.

Think of this as a point to reach for in your forced reps. This will be challenging at first because your brain is telling you to stop because this weight is too heavy. You have to resist that urge and just concentrate on fighting the negative; pushing against the weight as hard as you can, and relying on your partner to get you out of the point of failure.

## **Forced Dips**

Dips are one of the best pectoral exercises in existence. In fact I'm convinced if we ditched the flat bench and replaced it with Dips we'd all get the pecs we all dream about.

We will be utilizing forced dips in this workout. In order to do these I like to place a block or bench below the dipping station. Place it behind you far enough so that you can dip all the way down without brushing against it, but just far enough out so that after failure you can use its assistance.

The way you will utilize it is simple. Simply use your leg to push your body weight back up to the top of the range of motion and fight the negative as hard as you can! That's the key to any forced rep, but especially on forced dips or chin-ups. Even if you can't do 1 dip unassisted, you can still fight hard against the negative. After failure with just your bodyweight, or even if you can't do 1 dip on your own, set a goal for 3 forced dips.

For those who are more advanced and are doing dips with added weight, after failure you will need to remove the weight and continue the set with just your bodyweight for resistance. This will be extremely challenging, especially after we do some pre-exhaustion for the chest. You will also be doing 3 forced reps.

Whether you are doing the beginner forced rep method or the advanced one, I want your goal to be a slow 5 count for the descent portion of the forced dip. Really fight the negative hard and put as much of the stress as you can on your pecs. When you get to the bottom they will feel like they are being ripped off your torso if you're performing them correctly.

Let me also explain the correct technique for getting maximum stress on your pectorals during dips. As you mount the dipping bars aim your body forward, so that if it you could see yourself from the side you would be close to a 45 degree angle.

This will keep the stress on your chest and not your tris. This angle could vary from person to person.

The best way to find your personal angle is to simple perform a dip and lean forward until you feel your pecs being stretched hard. Now stay in this same angle and do your dips. Once you find this angle you will get into a "groove" with this exercise that will burn the pecs like nothing else! Just remember to squeeze your pecs hard at the top of the range of motion on the dips.

When you press back up push off with your palms. This also aids in keeping the chest under maximum tension.

### **Heavy; The theme of this cycle!**

I just wanted to re-emphasize that this series is founded upon heavy weights! Strive to go heavier than you've ever gone before! I'm going to prescribe rep ranges, but more importantly than reaching them, is that you've achieved the type of heaviness that the ranges impose!

For example if the exercise calls for 8 reps and you only get 6, don't fret it. The point is you went heavier than you ever had with that exercise and you failed because of the heaviness and not that a rep range told you to.

Feel the pain of the heavy iron in your hands, as you resist it with all your might. Muster all your strength and don't give into the desire to quit!

With this in mind, I don't ever want you to use the same weight twice when we're pyramiding up. Let's use the same example as above.

Let's say you used 100lb. dumbbells for the flat press and got 6 reps when the recommended amount was 8. Now the next set implores using a weight that you will fail at 6 reps. Don't think "well I'll stick with the 100lb. this time"

**NO!** I want you to go heavier, even if that means using the 105lb. and only getting 4 reps on the next set. Never, ever, use the same weight twice in a row when progressing upwards. You need to go heavy and stay heavy the whole time. These workouts are designed with the stabilizer/non stabilizer set-up so you can do just that. Stay at maximum immensity through the whole routine.

### **Contracting against the stretch- The secret of champions!**

However, there is a fundamental principle to this "heavy theme" that you need to recognize to get the most out of this series. You're not power lifting, you're body building.

There are basically only two functions a muscle has. It either stretches or contracts. When you are doing say, a dumbbell press, you need to find the point and angle where you feel your chest being stretched in that movement. Then contract your muscle against the stretch. Don't pull away from the stretch stay with it and contract your chest against it.

This is the same reason you see guys shrugging 100lb. dumbbells and they have no traps! They are simply moving weight.

As a body builder you need to fight against the stretch! Not just move weight. That is perhaps the greatest difference between body building and power lifting.

Power lifters are interested in moving the most weight they can at any cost, they ultimately could care less about hypertrophy. They focus on using momentum and multiple muscle groups to all coordinate together for the sole purpose of achieving a record breaking one rep max.

However, body builders are interested in moving heavy weights for the purpose of inducing hypertrophy. This means we have to feel the weights pull against our muscles and fight against that pull with muscular contraction. Master that principle and you will grow like crazy!

This is not easy, in fact it down right hurts. But if you begin implementing this principle you will soon understand what it takes to build a Herculean chest.

This goes for dips, presses, flys, and pullovers, and heck all your exercises and workouts in general. Feel the stretch in those exercises. Let the stretch pull on your chest, then contract and squeeze with your pecs against that stretch.

Don't pull away from the stretch, stay with it and push against it!

There are times when we will just be interested in power lifting in these routines, but unless I prescribe it, assume that you are to use the *Contracting against the Stretch* principle!

## Conclusion

OK! We're about to get into the good stuff....[The Workouts!](#)

I hope this article gave you a feel for the mentality you will have to have to achieve ultimate success from this 8-week cycle!

I recommend reading this article a few times through before starting this series! Make sure you know these principles and how they will work to your benefit in these routines.

Also, evaluate the nutrition and sleeping aspects of your body building career. *Are they up to par?* If you answered "yes" then you are ready to rumble! And I wish you the best of success with your new chest!

-Old School

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