

The Fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse— Training Guide



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Introduction

In the book of Revelation, we read about a great time of suffering, known as the Apocalypse, which can be defined as (Webster's Dictionary, 2005), "the expectation of an imminent cosmic cataclysm in which God destroys the ruling powers of evil and raises the righteous to life in a messianic kingdom." During the first set of judgments upon the earth, The Lamb—Jesus Christ—opens 4 seals, which releases 4 horsemen, who are sent to cause havoc on the earth. The 4th horseman, who rode upon what is described as a pale horse, is the most notable of all, for we read that his name was **Death**, and hell was as his shadow!

This verse optimizes the agony I am going to put my body through during the next 31 days! Hence, the name of these articles. The following articles will be perhaps the most unique workout series you have ever read. In part one, I am going to explain how and why I designed this training program, and in the second part, I am going to take you through 31 days of agony that I personally went through. Follow me further, if you dare...

Training Splits

A training split can be defined as the scheduling and distribution of your workouts over a short time span. Through the years, I have been asked by various athletes to design and critique literally hundreds of training splits. To design a split, I use a

system of methods. Below I am going to take you through the entire process I went through to design this training program. Hopefully, this can be used as a template for the reader to apply when making their own training split.

The Vision

When designing a program, you should go from a broad to narrow perspective. Start with a broad idea and don't limit your artistic thoughts. For example, don't tell yourself something can never be done. Put all your thoughts down on paper, and then analyze how you can go about accomplishing them.

The first thing you need is a vision. This vision should consist of your goals for the program, and then a basic framework to design the program based on science, experience, and artistic ness, which may consist of implementing completely novel methods never tried or suggested before.

I have been pondering this program since September, when I started my cut, and I was able to bring it to fruition. I had a vision of designing a training program guaranteed to stimulate muscular hypertrophy, and even hyperplasia, by combining years of scientific research and experience in the field of bodybuilding. It is the hardest split I have ever written! It was designed using numerous training principles, including studies on optimal training frequency, daily undulated periodization, summated microcycles, training a muscle twice in one day, and numerous other theories.

Scientific Framework

I had numerous ideas of theories I wanted to implement into this training program. I simply laid them out on paper, and later on, I thought of how I could combine them into a great training program. Below, I am going to discuss the methods that I wanted to implement.

Note:

In order to understand the next several paragraphs on periodization, you are going to need to study the following articles by Wilson, J., & Wilson G., (2005):

[Periodization Part 1 – History and Physiological Basis](#)

[Periodization Part 2 – Divisions of the Training Cycle](#)

[Periodization Part 3 – Traditional and Non-Traditional Periodization](#)

The subsequent discussion is based on their findings. For more information, refer to those articles.

Periodization, DUP, and Summated Microcycles

Periodization can be defined as the division of a training season, typically 1 year long, into smaller more manageable intervals with the ultimate goal of reaching peak

performance during primary competitions (Zatziorsky, 1995).

Traditional periodization involves phases lasting typically 4 weeks in duration. For example, you will train for hypertrophy for a month (i.e. in the 8-12 rep range with 1-2 minutes rest between sets) then go on a "strength" cycle for a month (i.e. 6-8 reps, 3-5 minutes rest between sets).

Poliquin investigated the effectiveness of the training program for football players. He particularly analyzed periodization.

Poliquin reported studies which found that strength programs lost their efficiency after only two weeks (Kulesza & Poliquin, 1985; Poliquin, 1985, b).

In light of this research, Poliquin suggested that traditional periodization had three fundamental problems.

1. A given mesocycle, such as a hypertrophy cycle, was typically not deviated from for at least 4 weeks. This length, however, would be accommodated to quickly, and gains would diminish.
2. Traditional periodization involves a continual increase in intensity, resulting in an accumulation of stress, promoting overtraining.
3. The hypertrophy gained from the first month of training would plummet over the next several months of strength/power phases, which involved higher intensities, and decreasing volumes, both of which are not conducive to hypertrophy, rendering the first month of traditional periodization practically worthless.

To combat these problems, Poliquin proposed what he called undulated (variations) periodization. This involved decreasing volume at a much slower rate, and intensity increasing more gradually than a traditional periodized program. Moreover, phases are only two weeks in duration, in comparison to four in the traditional protocol, decreasing the chance of accommodation.

Several modifications have been made to Poliquin's program. First, the term undulated periodization is tautologous or redundant because a periodized program by its very nature is undulated.

Therefore, a new and proper name has been chosen in its place—daily undulated periodization (DUP). This variation emphasizes that it is not the inclusion of undulation that makes this technique novel, but rather the degree of undulation.

Rhea et al. (2003) popularized the current forum of DUP. Instead of modifying training every three weeks, workouts in this paradigm are modified every session. An example of DUP would be training an exercise three times a week, such as squats. Monday, the athlete would perform three sets of squats, at a 12-15 RM, Wednesday four sets at a 8-10 RM; Friday, three sets at a 1-5 RM; Monday, repeat cycle.

Though more studies are needed on this method, the current research suggests that DUP is superior to traditional periodization.

Stone, in a round table on periodization (Haff, 2004) discussed a novel method, known as summated microcycles. This method uses undulations on a weekly basis. It usually consists of 4 weeks of blocked microcycles, representing one mesocycle. This mesocycle can then be repeated for further gains. There are numerous variations of

this program. One method is to take a traditional periodized program, and scale it to the microcycle level. For example, week one would be a hypertrophy cycle, week two a strength cycle, week three a power cycle, and week four a taper. Using this type of program would result in a continual increase in training intensity, which is why a taper is applied during the fourth week. After this, the cycle would start over.

Plisk (Haff, 2004) proposes that summated microcycles have three benefits: 1.) Summating overload over several weeks can increase the probability of converging training benefits. 2.) Weekly variations in training would obstruct accommodation. 3.) Lastly, the unloading phase would curtail stress, minimizing the likelihood of overtraining.

Further, it is commonly advised to arrange training phases into 4 weeks (Plisk and Stone, 2003). Matveyev (1972) proposes that natural monthly biocycles support the notion of a 4 week training cycle, divided into 4 varying microcycles. Zatsiorsky (1995) suggests that training cycles should be structured to a 4 (+-2) week phase, to superimpose the delayed training effects of several training variables dispersed over time.

Summated microcycles show great promise; however, the method is largely based on inference. More studies need to be done on its effectiveness, and proper applications.

Now, with this scientific framework in mind, I wanted to apply a method that President Wilson and I have discussed in times past. This was to combine DUP and some concepts from summative microcycles. To elaborate, DUP typically consists of slight variations in reps, rest, and volume from workout to workout. While summated microcycles make violent modifications, but on a weekly bases. Thus, we hypothesized that making these large modifications on a daily bases, would be highly effective.

In light of this, I thought of several typical mesocycles used during periodization, and broke them down to a DUP format. I decided to use a strength cycle, hypertrophy cycle, shock cycle, and active recovery cycle.

Strength & Hypertrophy Workouts Explained

This will follow the same principles of a traditional periodization strength cycle. Repetitions here will typically be 1-6, with 3-5 minutes rest in-between sets. Volume will be lower here.

The cadence (rep speed) will be 1-2 seconds on the concentric and eccentric portion of the repetition. Basically, it will as fast as possible, but in a controlled manner.

The hypertrophy workouts will also follow a traditional periodization format. This will involve moderate intensity, limited rest, and relatively higher volume. Typically 8-12+ reps are performed, with 1-2 minutes of rest between sets. The goal is to develop peripheral factors such as stronger tendon, and ligament strength, and enlarge cross sectional area (muscle mass), which will also allow you to increase the capacity to express a given skill, and avoid future injuries.

The Cadence will be 3-5 seconds on the eccentric phase (naturally longer for the legs) and 2 seconds for the concentric portion of the rep.

Shock Workouts Explained

Also known as an overreaching cycle, a shock cycle, or workout, entails the athlete training in such a way as to accumulate fatigue or depletion, followed by a longer than normal rest period. This combination is thought to lead to an even greater super compensation effect. An example would entail performing 10 strip sets on a body part, followed by greater rest periods between sessions. I will be performing some unique shocking methods, and will only train the muscle once that day (on most occasions). I will then allow a longer rest period time, around 4-5 days in duration.

Active Recovery Workouts Explained

I will be using the method prescribed by Wilson, G. (2003) in, [Active Recovery - A Threefold Breakdown](#).

I will perform a few light, high rep resistance training exercises. The goal is to enhance blood flow to the area, but at the same time, avoid any micro trauma to your muscles. As such, the weight will be of minimal resistance, and approximately 20 reps plus. Studies show eccentric training causes extreme muscular damage (refer to the following article for extensive research on this, [Cliff Hanger Part I](#)). As such, I will avoid tension on this portion of the repetition by performing a 1 second eccentric repetition per rep. The concentric aspect of the lift will last 1-2 seconds. I will do around 2-5 sets per muscle group. A sample workout for forearms would entail 2 sets of 20 reps with reverse barbell wrist curls, and 2 sets of 20 reps with barbell wrist curls, using minimal resistance. I will primarily do this with my criterion lifts (explained further on).

Note:

In order to understand the next several paragraphs on training frequency, you are going to need to study the following article by Wilson, J., & Wilson G., (2005):

[Specificity Part VI: The effect of Practice Distribution & Contextual Interference on Performance & Learning](#)

The subsequent discussion is based on their findings. For more information, refer to that article.

Training Frequency

Wilson J., & Wilson G., (2005) suggest that mass vs. distributed practice should be viewed on a continuum—meaning that practice is relatively more massed or distributed. For instance, if a set of squats lasts for 30 seconds, a 1 minute rest period and a 5 minute rest period would both be considered distributed, using the former definition. But, if viewed on a continuum, the 5 minute rest period was relatively more distributed than the 1 minute rest period.

The effect of practice distribution on performance and learning has been investigated extensively for discrete tasks. A discrete task is a task with a discernable beginning and ending point. This would include most weight lifting skills, and swinging a bat or a golf club. Discrete tasks are characterized by rapid movements, with very short movement times (I.e. less than 1 millisecond).

Evidence strongly suggests that distributed practice is superior to massed practice for both performance and learning, when performing discrete tasks. However, when transferring to massed practice, such as practicing for wrestling, it would be beneficial to practice at least in part using shorter rest times. Evidence suggests that such a training protocol will produce several advantageous adaptations such as an increased capacity to clear lactic acid. The athlete should therefore, be aware of their rest times during the actual event, and practice with those same rest intervals frequently, to maximize transfer.

It is typically recommended to take 3-5 minutes rest between sets to maximize performance and learning.

For long term practice distribution, there are several applications. For instance, spreading your workout out to 2 sessions in one day is a very effective method. For example, evidence suggests that performing 15 sets of legs in the first session, and 15 in the second, is superior to 30 sets in one workout. Increasing the frequency throughout the week, and lowering your volume each workout is a very effective protocol as well. An example would be doing 30 sets of legs Monday, and 30 sets on Friday, instead of doing 60 in one workout.

One issue the athlete must take into account is total practice time. While distributed practice is superior to massed given an equal number of trials, it takes much longer to complete than massed practice. Therefore, the athlete must find a happy medium between distributing the practice, and optimizing total repetitions.

In this context, I wanted to design a program that optimized practice distribution. What I decided to do was train a muscle 2 times in a day during strength and hypertrophy workouts. On most shock days, I will only train once per day, because that workout should be adequate enough to cause serious damage. On the active recovery days, only a few sets during one session is needed, so this will also only be performed once.

Based on my past experience with numerous training splits with DUP, I decide to give myself 2-3 days rest between strength, hypertrophy, and shock days, which would accumulate the fatigue. After the shock workout, I would take 5 days rest before my next strength workout, to allow for an even greater super compensation effect. During this 5 day rest period, I would perform one active recovery workout, to hasten to recovery process. Note that this strictly dealt with how I would train with large muscle groups (back, delts, pecs, and legs). I will discuss how I trained small muscle groups later.

For rest between sets, as stated, I will be taking 3-5 minutes rest during my strength days, which is optimal for sensory motor skill acquisition (motor learning). The shocking method workouts will vary. During active recovery sessions, 2 minutes rest will suffice.

During the hypertrophy workouts, however, I will only have 1-2 minutes rest between sets, or less. Often times, I will utilize the I go you go method, which will involve my partner doing a set, followed immediately by me doing a set, and immediately repeating the procedure. The reason for this is that evidence suggests short rest times are excellent for hypertrophy, in that it maximizes growth hormone secretion. Refer to Wilson, J., (2005) for more information on this, [The Growth Hormone – IGF Axis and its Role in Muscular Hypertrophy](#).

Note:

In order to understand the next several paragraphs on Random Practice, you are going to need to study the following article by Wilson, J., & Wilson G., (2005):

[Specificity Part VI: The effect of Practice Distribution & Contextual Interference on Performance & Learning](#)

The subsequent discussion is based on their findings. For more information, refer to that article

Criterion Lifts & Random Practice Explained

Typically, I pick one or two lifts for every body part, and prioritize it during my workout. For example, I always do it first, or second, and use several practice variables to increase the lift, such as random and distributed practice, and I also maintain the same cadence (repetition speed; I use the cadence prescribed for "strength" workouts) during my lifts (so they do not change on strength or hypertrophy days; but they do change on shock days.) I also take 3-5 minutes rest between sets during strength *and* hypertrophy workouts, to maximize learning of these skills. For example, I am prioritizing squats right now during my leg workouts, and always do it first, and use several methods to optimize it. Same thing for several other lifts. Here are my criterion lifts right now:

Delts

Dumbbell Shoulder Press

Upright Rows

Chest

Incline Dumbbell Bench

Flat Dumbbell Bench

Back

Bodybuilding Dead lifts

Bent Over Rows

Legs

Squats

Biceps

Alternating Dumbbell Curls

Forearms

Reverse Barbell Curls

Behind the back Wrist curls

Triceps

Skull crunchers

Calves

Leg press calve raises

Now, I explained practice distribution, but I have not explained Random Practice.

Blocked practice occurs when trials are performed sequentially without interruption. Random practice occurs when trials are never performed more than once in order. An example would be a bodybuilder performing 3 sets of leg extensions, squats, and hamstring curls each. A blocked schedule would entail performing 3 consecutive sets on each; a randomized schedule would entail switching exercises after each set. For example: one set of squats, one set of leg extensions, one set of hamstring curls, repeat.

Evidence is very clear on the effect of blocked and random practice on performance and learning: relative to random practice, blocked practice enhances performance and depresses learning, while random practice depresses performance and enhances learning. When random practice is implemented, current evidence suggests that randomized blocks, which entails participants performing random practice every 2-3 sets, may be just as beneficial or even better for learning as random practice, while minimizing the acquisition decrements experienced from contextual interference. Thus, if an athlete performs 5 sets of squats, they may only randomize it on set 2 and 4. So here would be a sample workout for me on a criterion lift:

2 sets of squats
1 set of dumbbell shrugs
2 sets of squats
1 set of dumbbell shrugs
1 set of squats

Another method of random practice is modeling, which is the demonstration of task (with an auditory, still, or live model) before it is performed. Studies have found that just watching a model perform random practice is superior to watching a model performed blocked for sensory motor skill acquisition.

However, when performing random practice, if the athlete watches between sets, it abolishes the benefits of random practice. For instance, say the athlete performs a set of squats, and then leg extensions, and then goes back to squats. If before going back to squats the second time, the athlete watches someone perform squats (such as spotting a partner) the benefits of random practice will be destroyed. So if the athlete is spotting a partner, what they may do is, a set of squats, spot their partner, then perform leg extensions, and then go back to squats to avoid this predicament.

Exercise Sequence

Another method of random practice used, is to train one body part for several sets, then another for several sets, and then go back to the body part you started with for several sets. For example, my two criterion lifts for pecs are incline dumbbell bench and flat dumbbell bench. After 5 sets of incline dumbbell bench, my pecs will be very fatigued. To allow my pecs more time for recovery, instead of going straight to flat dumbbell bench, I could do biceps for several sets, and then go back to chest. This would allow me to perform more total work with my chest, and still allow me to train my body during the rest period. So I wanted to design a split that included training large with small muscle groups for this reason, among others.

One important factor to consider here is exercise sequence. An exercise sequence should minimally involve the same muscle groups. For example, flat barbell bench press (works chest and triceps), tricep extensions (works triceps), and decline barbell bench press (works chest and triceps) would be a poor exercise sequence. This sequence would not allow for optimal work output, because you would be fatigued. So I wanted to design a split that combined muscles which did not conflict much, such as legs and biceps. I imagined that some days it would be difficult to manage this, so I decided that if they're were days within my split that I had to train conflicting muscles together, I would typically perform large muscle groups followed by small, which is a commonly used training method, because large muscle group exercises typically require the greatest motor coordination, and you do not want to be overly fatigued when performing them. Further, if I did randomize conflicting exercises, I would try to work around the conflicting muscle groups as much as possible. For instance, if I combined calves with thighs, I may train the tibialis between sets of legs, that do not utilize this muscle as greatly as the gastrocnemius, such as lying hamstring curls.

Lastly, because of the extreme fatigue training large muscle groups can have on your body, I wanted to design a split that avoided training large muscle groups together as much as possible, so I could give maximum effort every workout.

Conflicting Training Days

Conflicting training days occur when performance is hindered during a workout, because of the muscles trained in a preceding workout. Here are several examples of conflicting training days:

- Triceps before Pecs
- Delts before Pecs, and visa versa
- Calves before Thighs
- Back before Thighs, and visa versa

- Biceps before back
- Forearms before back
- Abs before back

Here is an example of an incorrect training split. See if you can catch the mistakes here:

Day 1: Chest

Day 2: Delts

Day 3: Biceps

Day 4: Back

Day 5: Legs/calves

Day 6: Triceps/forearms

Day 7: Start over

I'll give you some time to think before critiquing this...

There are several problems in this split. Pecs are trained before delts, biceps before back, back before legs, and triceps before chest. All of these conflicting training days will hinder performance.

With this in mind, a goal of mine for this split, was to design it so that I had at least one day of rest between conflicting muscle groups. For example, if chest was trained day one, delts would not be trained earlier than day 3.

Exercise Choice

Here is a quote from Wilson, J., (2005) explaining exercise choice, and how to manipulate it to maximize growth hormone secretion:

1. Exercise Choice – This variable is related to compound vs. isolation exercises, as well as the size of the muscle groups being trained. In a recent review on GH, Fleck and Kramer (2004) provided evidence that GH is released to a greater extent with compound vs. isolation exercises, and in exercises that involve larger rather than smaller muscle groups. Compound exercises involve movements at more than

one joint. In this context, when all other variables are held constant a bench press which involves movement at both the elbow and glenohumeral joints would have a greater effect than the dumbbell fly at stimulating a GH response. Further, when comparing squats to bench presses, the squat which involves larger muscle groups such as the gluteals, quadriceps, and hamstrings would elicit a greater GH response than the bench press, which mainly stimulates the pectorals and triceps. The theoretical rationale is the fast twitch fiber feedback hypothesis and lactate concentration hypothesis, explained under exercise intensity.

In this context, Wilson J., suggested that, "it may be valuable to perform compound before isolation exercises, as well as train small body parts after large body parts so as to expose them to a physiologically high concentration of GH."

Thus, a goal of mine for this program was to design it so that I could train small muscle groups with large muscle groups, in order to expose them to higher concentrations of growth hormone.

Rest

The last year I have tried to train with weights seven days per week. But I found that this caused excessive fatigue, and hindered my performance. Further, the majority of authors I have read suggest that one day of rest per week is sufficient to dissipate the fatigue during a split (Fry, 1988; Fry, Kraemer, Lynch, Triplett, and Koziris, 1994).

For example, in a review on the fitness and fatigue model (refer to, [Tapering Part 1 - Two Factor Theory](#) for more information) Loren, Chiu, and Barnes (2003) suggest that, "Even 1 day per week of rest can be sufficient for recovery (12, 13)."

Therefore, I wanted to design a split where I took one day off every single week from weight training, and just performed some cardio and abs.

Priority Principle

Now that we have established our scientific, artistic, and experiential framework for this split, we need to discuss the priorities of the split. Most of the time, we are limited with the amount of time we train due to school, work, family, etc. Therefore, certain days we may not be able to train at all, or perhaps only once. So before designing a split, we should lay down a set of parameters to work with. For example, Monday, no workouts, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, only train once. You have to also consider the experience of the athlete. For example, you should not start out training twice a day as a newbie, even if your schedule allows it. Then design your split working along these parameters.

With time constraints, it becomes important to prioritize certain body parts. The athletes should analyze their strengths and weaknesses, and prioritize them appropriately. For example, if your Chest and triceps are your strengths, and your back and biceps your weaknesses, you may train chest and triceps only once a week, and Back twice, and biceps 2-3 times during a week. Prioritizing certain muscle groups allows you to work within time constraints, and still effectively prioritize your weakest muscle groups.

For my split, I designed it around a time of the year when I have a lot more free time. So I was free to do whatever I felt was optimal for a training split, meaning I often train 2-3 times per day during this split. Thus, my priorities during this split were pretty much everything!

More Parameters

For large muscle groups, I wanted to *typically* follow these guidelines:

Heavy Cycle—Train twice in one day

2 days rest

Hypertrophy Cycle—Train twice in one day

3 days rest

Shock cycle—train once

3 days rest

Active recovery—train once

2 days rest

Repeat

Lastly, I decided to make it a 30 day program.

Designing the Split

With the scientific framework laid, and several parameters set, I was ready to make my split. I started out by making a 30 day spread sheet, consisting of morning and evening sessions. I began by just laying out large muscle groups, according to the aforementioned parameters. I did not even consider conflicting days, small body parts, or abs and cardio. I also set one day aside for rest every week.

After I designed a rough draft split, I went through and critiqued it. Here are the critiques I found.

Easy days—I listed the days where I only trained once, or had the entire day off, so I knew what days I had to work with so I could adjust my split accordingly.

Day 9, night session

Day 10, night session

Day 12, both sessions

Day 13, both sessions

Day 23, night session

Day 24, night session

Day 26, night session

Day 27, entire day

2 workout days—I listed the days in which I trained large muscle groups together during the same workout. Remember, a goal of mine was to avoid training large muscle groups in the same workout. So I needed to make some adjustments here.

Day 3, morning

Day 8, morning

Day 15, morning

Day 22, morning

Day 29, morning and night

Conflicting Days—I listed days that conflicted with each other, such as training back after legs, and delts before pecs. As you recall, avoiding this was also a goal of mine.

Day 3, back shock after legs heavy

Day 4, delts hypertrophy after back and pecs

Day 9, legs shock after back heavy

Day 16, legs heavy after back shock

Day 18, Delts hypertrophy after pecs heavy

Day 23, legs shock after back heavy

Frequency—here, I listed how frequently I trained each large muscle group. My goal was to train them equally, so some adjustments needed to be made here.

Delts, legs, and chest 9 days out of 30. Back 8 days out of 30. All include 2 days of active recovery

After spending several hours making revisions, I again critiqued my split and made the following notes:

Easy days

Day 8, night

Day 10 night

Day 11 night

Day 12 whole day

Day 23, evening

Day 24, night

Note: All these easy days I planed to use later to fit my small muscle groups in the split.

2 workout days

Day 3 back shock with pecs heavy

Day 15, back shock with legs heavy

Note: I could settle for only 2 days where I combined body parts. So I stuck with this.

Conflicting Days

Day 3, back shock after legs heavy

Day 4, delts hypertrophy after back and pecs heavy

Day 15, back with legs

Day 18, Delts hypertrophy after pecs heavy

Note: Again, I could settle for few conflicting days of training. I also designed it so that I trained different muscle fibers during the conflicting workouts (i.e. hypertrophy workouts will recruit a different motor neuronal pool then strength workouts). Due to the specificity of fatigue, this would minimize the hindrance training these muscle groups would have on each other.

Frequency

legs, back, delts, chest all are 9

Note: This was exactly what I wanted! I also made sure I got at least 4 days rest before heavy days, and no conflicting days before heavy days in the split. Below I listed what these 9 workouts consisted of for each muscle group. It came out very symmetrical.

Heavy workouts

chest, delts, legs 3 days

back 2 days

Shock workouts

Chest, delts, legs 2 days

Back 3 days

Hypertrophy workouts

2 for everything

Active recovery Workouts

2 days for everything

After this, I was satisfied with how I designed the split for my large muscle groups. I considered this the hardest part of designing the split, and was very relieved to finish it. I then moved on to small muscle groups.

I made some parameters for this to start. I decided to up the frequency for small muscle groups, as they recover more frequently, to 12 days total in a 30 day time span, I also eliminated the active recovery day. And went with this:

Strength
Hypertrophy
Shock
Repeat

The rest days would look like this:

Strength

2 days rest

Hypertrophy

2 days rest

Shock

4 days rest

repeat

On the strength and hypertrophy days, I wanted to train twice a day as often as I could.

I spent several hours trying to put what I had in mind together. I had to make several revisions, on rest, and sometimes had to settle for training the muscle only

once on strength and hypertrophy days. But I was satisfied with the end result. After analyzing the split, I found that I could not obtain training 12 days a month for all of these small muscle groups without hindering my performance, and I was satisfied with the frequency. So I went with the following:

10 days biceps

8 days calves

11 days triceps

8 days Forearms

I tried to train small muscle groups with large as much as possible, in order to expose small muscle groups to larger growth hormone concentrations. I also limited training conflicting muscle groups, such as triceps and pecs.

Then I added cardio. I first added it to every 7th day; it worked perfect, because I had no legs on the following day. Then, I added cardio on practically every leg day, as a form of active recovery between evening and night leg sessions. In total, I will perform cardio 11 times in 30 days. For cardio, I will primarily be performing moderate intensity cardio, at 65% of my VO2 max. This is to optimize total fat oxidation. For more information, refer to [Direct Comparisons of Fuel use during Low, Moderate, and High Intensity Exercises](#).

Last but not least was abs. I started with 4 days on my off days with cardio, twice. Then, I added 1-2 sessions on several days, for a total of training abs 11 times, several of which were twice in one day.

My final training split can be viewed under Table 1.

Adjustments

Any athlete must be ready to make adjustments to their initial split. This can be due to various reasons such as injury, overtraining, and time constraints. These type of occurrences happen often to athletes, so you should not be surprised or depressed when you have to make an adjustment. Just be prepared to do so, and work with what you have.

Adjustments

Below, I listed adjustments I made to my program and training split throughout the 31 day program:

- During day 6 of my program, I wrote down originally that I was going to do triceps heavy, but it was supposed to be triceps hypertrophy, so I modified that.
- During day 8, I originally planned to do delts/triceps early, calves/abs later. But as I was training delts, I realized that it would be much wiser to distribute

the workload more, and train triceps/calves at night, and abs with delts instead.

- I previously wanted to follow Old Schools Abdominal routine, which can be found in JHR. But I decided it was too much for this program, so I instead designed my own abdominal workouts.
- On day 14, I had planned to do abs and cardio. But I felt tired, so I decided it would be better to take the day off.
- I cut out back shock on day 27 - I was not recovered enough to do that type of workout.

Is this the "Ultimate" Split?

No, it is not. That is because there is no such thing as the "ultimate" training split. I have done countless splits, and gotten great results from several of them. The key is variation. Our bodies are experts at adapting to training programs, so we must constantly vary our routines to maintain a steady flow of growth. This is why we have published dozens of articles on ABCbodybuilding.com, and will continue to. The more workouts you can add to your repertoire, the better.

Should I do this when I am cutting?

Absolutely not! It is mandatory that you go on a bulk, or at least maintenance diet, ample in carbohydrates, if you are to perform this program and see results.

Diet and Supplementation

Your diet and supplementation must be spotless on this program. During these 30 days, I set process goals every day for both my diet and supplementation regimen. You can view what supplements I use here, [Goal Setting](#). I would also read the [24 Workout Mass Diet](#) for a solid bulking plan.

For post workout nutrition, I had 2 post workout shakes a day, following the recommendations prescribed in the [The Window of Opportunity](#) this is perhaps the most vital meals of your diet. Please do not miss this opportunity for growth!

Sleep

Simply put, sleep is when growth occurs, so to miss out on this would be to sabotage your hard-work. Follow the guidelines for sleep prescribed by Knowlden (2003):

[Enter The Z Factor](#)

[Z-Factor II - The Slumber Dynamic](#)

[Analysis of The Two-Process Model Of Sleep](#)

Results and Critiques

The program was absolutely brutal. But the results were worth it.

- I gained about 15 pounds (mostly muscle).
- I added 40 pounds on my squat! That is just ridiculous!
- I added 20 pounds on my dumbbell shoulder press and incline dumbbell press, each.
- My delts are way fuller.
- My calves, biceps, and forearms grew, but not to well. These are just hard muscles for me to develop.
- My triceps got some solid growth.

I could not ask for many more results than I got.

I think it was a fantastic program. Some potential modifications I would make, is to have a better game plan on my exact workout volume, exercises, etc. It was difficult to write out all 60 workouts on a daily bases. It would have helped if I had pre-planned this. I could not be as creative as I would have liked because of this.

But overall, I could not be happier with my results.

Conclusion

Part one of this series explained the theoretical rationales behind the program, details on how to perform the program, and also gave a template on critiquing and designing training splits. With the foundation laid, we are ready to move on to the workouts. [Click Here](#) to read on.

For the training split for this program, a summary of the methods used in this split, and a template for designing/critiquing training splits, please refer to tables 1, 2, and figure 1, respectively.

Keep it Hardcore,

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Table 1.

Final 30 day training Split

Day 1

Morning or Afternoon Session

Delts Heavy
Biceps Heavy
Forearms Heavy

Evening Session

Delts Heavy
Biceps Heavy
Forearms Heavy

Day 2

Morning or Afternoon Session

Legs Heavy
Calves Heavy

Afternoon

30 Minutes cardio active recovery

Evening Session

Legs Heavy
Calves Heavy

Day 3

Morning or Afternoon Session

Evening Session

Day 4

Morning or Afternoon Session

Evening Session

Delts Hypertrophy
Biceps Hypertrophy

Day 5

Morning or Afternoon Session

Legs Hypertrophy
Calves Hypertrophy
Abs

Afternoon

30 Minutes cardio active recovery

Evening Session

Legs Hypertrophy
Calves Hypertrophy
Abs

Day 6

Morning or Afternoon Session

Chest Hypertrophy
Triceps Hypertrophy
Back Active Recovery

Evening Session

Chest Hypertrophy
Biceps Shock
Triceps Hypertrophy

Day 7

Cardio/abs day 1: 30 minutes cardio morning and night, and abs

Day 8

Morning or Afternoon Session

Delts Shock
Abs

Evening Session

Calves Shock
Triceps Shock

Day 9

Morning or Afternoon Session

Back Heavy
Abs

Evening Session

Back Heavy
Forearms Shock

Day 10

Morning or Afternoon Session

Chest Shock
Triceps Heavy

Evening Session

Triceps Heavy
Abs

Day 11

Morning Session

Legs Shock
Biceps Strength

Afternoon

30 Minutes cardio active recovery

Evening Session

Biceps Strength
Forearms Hypertrophy

Day 12

Morning or Afternoon Session

Calves Strength
Triceps Hypertrophy
Delts Active Recovery

Evening Session

Calves Strength
Triceps Hypertrophy

Day 13

Morning or Afternoon Session

Back Hypertrophy
Biceps Hypertrophy
Legs Active Recovery

Evening Session

Back Hypertrophy
Biceps Hypertrophy

Day 14

off

Day 15

Morning or Afternoon Session

Delts Heavy
Triceps Shock

Evening Session

Delts Heavy
Chest Active Recovery

Day 16

Morning Session

Legs Heavy, 1/2 back shock

Afternoon

30 Minutes cardio active recovery

Evening Session

Legs Heavy, 1/2 back shock
Abs

Day 17

Morning or Afternoon Session

Chest Heavy
Biceps Shock

Evening Session

Chest Heavy
Calves Hypertrophy

Day 18

Morning or Afternoon Session

Delts Hypertrophy
Triceps Heavy

Evening Session

Delts Hypertrophy
Triceps Heavy

Day 19

Morning Session

Legs Hypertrophy
Calves Hypertrophy

Afternoon

30 Minutes cardio active recovery

Evening Session

Legs Hypertrophy
Forearms Shock
Back Active Recovery

Day 20

Morning or Afternoon Session

Chest Hypertrophy
Triceps Hypertrophy

Evening Session

Chest Hypertrophy
Triceps Hypertrophy

Day 21

Cardio/abs day 1: 30 minutes cardio morning and night, and abs

Day 22

Morning or Afternoon Session

Back Heavy
Biceps Heavy
Chest active recovery

Evening Session

Back Heavy
Biceps Heavy
Abs

Day 23

Morning or Afternoon Session

Delts Shock
Forearms Hypertrophy

Evening Session

Triceps Shock
Forearms hypertrophy

Day 24

Morning or Afternoon Session

Legs Shock
Biceps Hypertrophy

Afternoon

30 Minutes cardio active recovery

Evening Session

Biceps Hypertrophy
Calves Shock
Abs

Day 25

Morning or Afternoon Session

Chest Heavy
Triceps Heavy

Evening Session

Chest heavy
Triceps Heavy

Day 26

Morning or Afternoon Session

Back Hypertrophy
Calves Heavy
Legs Active Recovery

Evening Session

Back Hypertrophy
Calves Heavy
Delts Active Recovery

Day 27

Morning or Afternoon Session

Chest Shock
Biceps Shock

Evening Session

Forearms Shock

Day 28

Cardio/abs day 1: 30 minutes cardio morning and night, and abs

Day 29

Christmas! I took an extra day off.

Day 30

Morning or Afternoon Session

Delts Heavy
Triceps Hypertrophy

Evening Session

Delts Heavy
Triceps Hypertrophy

Day 31

Morning or Afternoon Session

Legs Heavy
Biceps Heavy
Forearms Heavy

Afternoon

30 Minutes cardio active recovery

Evening Session

Legs Heavy
Biceps Heavy
Forearms Heavy

Table 2

Guidelines for this Training Program

	Reps	Sets	Rest between sets	Cadence ¹	Additional Comments	Rest between workouts
Strength	1-6	Low-Moderate	3-5 minutes	1, 1-2, 1, 1-2	-	2 days
Hypertrophy	8-12+	High	1-2 minutes or less	1, 3-5, 1, 2	-	3 days
Shock	Will Vary	Will Vary	Will Vary	Will Vary	-	3 days
Active Recovery	20	2-5		1, 1, 1, 1-2	-	2 days
Criterion Lifts	Will vary	Will Vary	3-5 minutes	1, 1-2, 1, 1-2	Use Random blocks; avoid modeling	-

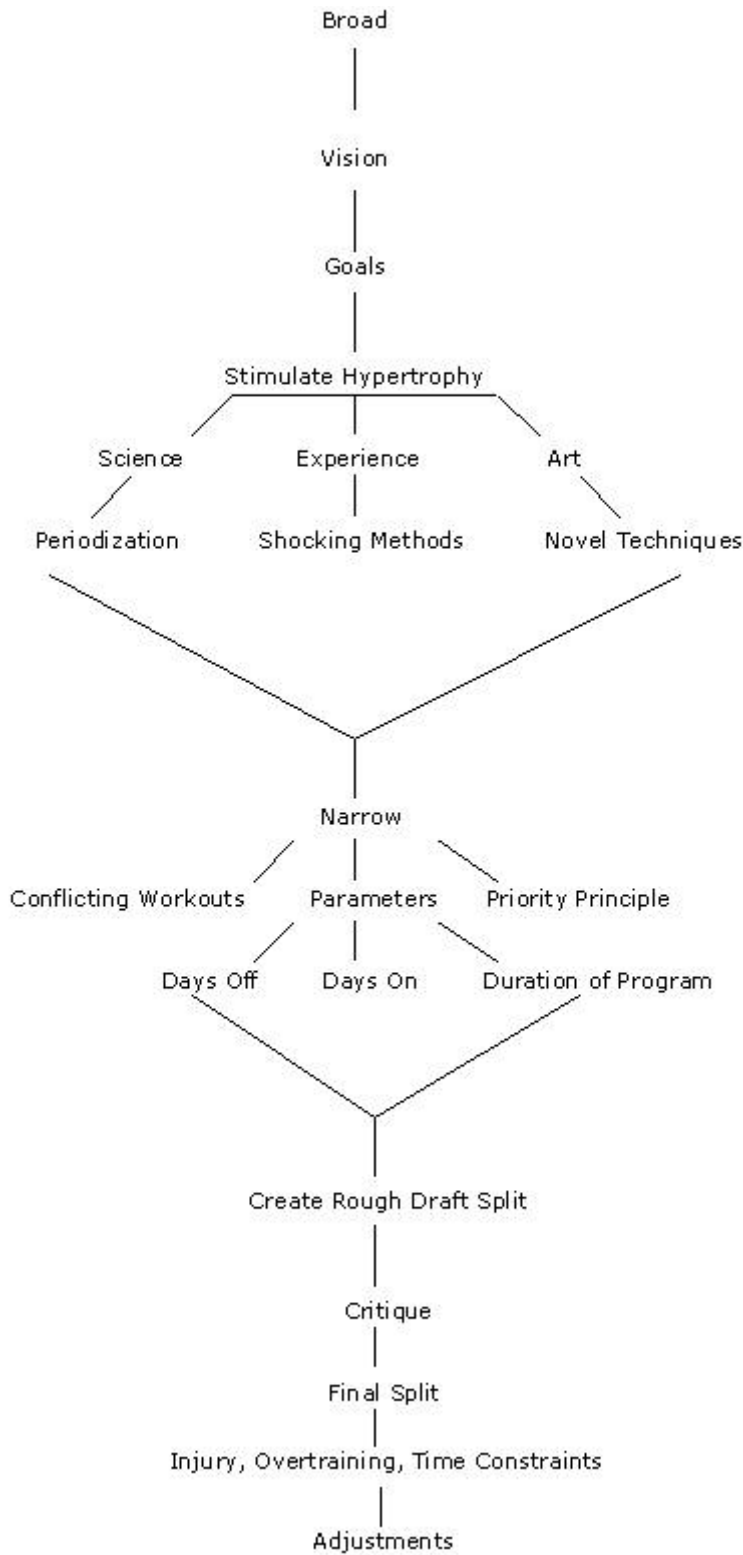


Figure 1

Template for Designing/Critiquing Training Splits

Notes

¹The numbers in order refer to the top portion of the lift, eccentric portion, bottom portion, and eccentric portion. So these numbers listed under strength: 1, 1-2, 1, 1-2 would refer to 1 second on the top, 1-2 seconds on the eccentric, 1 second on the bottom, and 1-2 seconds on the concentric. This will vary slightly according to the lift. For example, squats will naturally have a longer cadence than calve raises. But the primary point is, you should go as fast as possible on strength days, but in a controlled manner.