

8 weeks to Bigger Shoulders - Construction Plans

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Building a Battering Ram Worthy of War!

Welcome, to part 2 of a 3 part series of workouts whose sole purpose is designed to enhance your pushing muscles to a new meaning of three dimensional! There is no doubt that it takes a barrel chest and thunderous triceps to create a body builder masterpiece! But what is the one muscle group that supports your whole physique on a pillar of rock; the one muscle group that can not be hidden in any pose; the one muscle group that you can not hide, even under thick clothing? If you answered "Shoulders" you passed with flying colors.

No aspect of the body is as prominent as the deltoids. They can scream "body builder!" from a mile away. They are absolutely essential to the X taper we all so desperately seek. Without a shadow of a doubt they are vital to your build. For this reason they are the cross piece of the battering Ram; The driving mechanism that will shatter homeostasis to pieces. For the following eight weeks you will be constructing "the beam" of the battering ram, the very essence of the weapon so to speak. This crosspiece was not only vital to the success of the battering ram, but it will also be equally as vital to your physique. The amount of force the battering Ram could exert was only as strong as it's cross piece. Keep this in mind as your approach these workouts. You are literally forming the cross piece of your physique!

The Blue Prints of the Beam

What exactly is the design of this cross beam of your physique?

The shoulder (deltoid) is a large, three-headed, thick, triangular muscle which begins from the clavicle and the scapula at the back of the shoulder, and extends down to its' insertion in the upper arm region. The muscle group's name originates from the triangular shaped Greek letter Delta, which is taken from its triangular appearance.

Before we tackle these workouts it's important to note that there are three separate heads of the deltoid muscle group. Each of these three heads performs their own function that gives the great mobility of the deltoid region. Let me explain further...

The basic function of the shoulder complex is to rotate and lift the arm in a nearly 360 degree motion. With such a large range of motion there are many angles which we can train the shoulders to bring out their full shape and development.

Each head of the shoulder complex functions in unison together with some of the fibers of all three heads contracting, coordinating, and balancing each other regardless of which way the plane of resistance is originating.

But, depending on the section of the range of motion, each head of the deltoid is stressed more than the other two to allow this 360 degree rotation.

So, logically, an optimal shoulder prioritization workout cycle would focus on building up all three of the deltoid heads! This is the logic that will be applied to the next eight weeks!

Motionary Complexes Uncovered

1. The **anterior** (front) deltoid lifts the arm to the **front**.

Front raises with a barbell, dumbbell, EZ curl bar and cables are all excellent pieces of equipment for stimulating the frontal delts. Frontal deltoid strength is imperative in numerous lifts. They are primarily responsible for getting you out of the "hole" or starting point in almost any pressing exercises, and also tend to take the brunt of the load for the first half of shoulder pressing exercises.

2. The **medial** (side) deltoid lifts the arm to the **side**.

Dumbbell and cable exercises can create a whole pantheon of lateral side delt movements! This part of the shoulder tends to take over at the top half to top one-third of the range of motion in a shoulder press.

A lot of shoulder width is determined by your skeletal structure. However, the medial shoulder pads are the chief muscle responsible for creating the impression of width in the upper body. So, even if you are born with a narrow skeletal structure, don't give up hope! Just take medial deltoid training very seriously and constantly shock this area into new growth.

Broader shoulders can also create the illusion of a narrower waistline, which is a crucial part of the formula for achieving the V shape in the upper body!

3. The **posterior** (rear) deltoid lifts the arm to the **rear**.

I also wanted to convey an important message conveying lagging posterior delts and a full range of motion.

The main stimulus for achieving complete development in the rear delts is attaining a full range of motion. This mentality applies to any exercise. I find that dumbbell movements that involve using two arms at the same time can restrict the rear delts' full range of motion.

Let me explain...

Get into the same position you would when you are about to execute a bent-over lateral raise. Now, make a fist with your right hand and reach all the way across your chest until that same fist touches your left shoulder. This arm position is the bottom

of the range of motion for your rear delts.

Two handed dumbbell movements only allow you to go to the center of your chest (where the dumbbells meet in a bent-over raise), thus cutting the range in motion in half!

Now two handed dumbbell types of exercise definitely have their usefulness! Don't take that statement the wrong way; bent-over laterals are a legendary rear delt exercise. You can get more power and weight with two-handed exercises.

But I think many people's rear shoulders plateau because they do not include exercises that give a full range of motion, like one handed movements do.

Putting the beam together!

You can't escape your shoulders. They are literally the brace of your whole frame. They can be seen from any angle you are at, so balance in this region is going to be a big priority in this series.

The development and thickness of all three shoulder heads play a role in giving a balanced look to the upper body when viewed from all sides.

This progression is highly dependent on balanced deltoid development. From the back, the V taper is highly dependent on how much shape, separation, and definition you have achieved in the rear delts. From the front and from the back, good medial deltoid development makes you look wider, which is also crucial for the V taper. From the side view, front deltsoids make the man (or woman). As you can see, the complete development of all three heads is of the utmost importance!

Your shoulders should show definition and striations no matter what pose you perform when you are ripped. There has to be a balance in the shape so that all three heads coordinate with each other, and with all the neighboring muscles, to give the look of complete deltoid development.

Not only does each head have to be developed in proportion to each other, each must be completely separate from the others. So that all three separate heads are distinguishable from the other.

The ideal shoulder complex should also be completely separated from the muscles of the upper arm, along with the trapezius and upper back muscles. The front delts also must be distinct from the sweep of the pectoral muscles. This kind of shape and definition in the shoulder region can only come about from separate isolation work for each head.

For this reason we will focus on bringing out the definition of all three heads over the next eight weeks. Each week we will hone in on shaping one particular head, with the overall intent of equal proportion of the deltoid region.

Now we will hit all three heads each week, but each session we will focus more on exercises that stress a particular head over the other two heads. So in essence, we are using the prioritization principal to the extreme. This cycle's overall scheme is to

prioritize the shoulders, but we will take that principle to the next level and prioritize each individual head of the shoulder, on a week by week basis.

I call this the *specialization principle*.

Basically it can be described as prioritizing a particular part or range of motion (angle) of a muscle group, while at the same time prioritizing the muscle group as a whole.

This layout can be illustrated like this:

Overall we are prioritizing the Deltoids during this cycle. But...

Week 1: Specialize on the Front deltoid

Week 2: Specialize on the Side Deltoid

Week 3: Specialize on the Rear deltoid

Week 4: Specialize in proportion of all 3 heads together.

This principle can be used on any muscle group! And helps to set goals of proportion much better. As we know, the correct ratio within a muscle group can make or break a championship physique. For example you can have a Herculean chest, but if the lower chest is out of proportion with the upper chest, it will completely throw off the whole pectoral region! If this is the case I would suggest the *specialization principle* to set realistic goals of bringing any lagging areas into proportion.

Nothing will propel the Battering Ram like Raw Power!

I personally believe power training is detrimental to maximum shoulder development. The deltoids respond well to working with heavy weights. This also helps your overall development in many other muscle groups because so many other power exercises rely on elemental deltoid strength.

All whole slew of exercises, ranging from Bent-Over Rows to the Bench Presses to Dead lifts to frontal squats, relies heavily on basic fundamental shoulder strength. That's why I strongly advise exercises like the Hang Clean, heavy Upright Rows, power rack presses and Push Presses in addition to Dumbbell Laterals of all angles for overall deltoid progression. Your shoulders are literally the pillar of your upper body! Strengthening this area will yield very desirable results in all your other lifts. I even believe squat maximums can be increased due to shoulder development! I've noticed that the bigger my shoulders get the more comfortably and more balanced huge poundages feel across my upper back! Now doubt broader shoulders and thicker traps are to blame!

As you can see, building up power in this area will improve your entire lifting career! Not to mention the size increases in your deltoids from this type of training! As you can imagine we will be implementing all types of shoulder power lifts in the next eight weeks!

However, you need more than just mass and strength. We also want to work toward overall shoulder development. This means symmetry and detail in all three heads of the deltoids as well as the trapezius muscles. So, isolation exercises and detailing techniques will definitely have their place in this program. To get the total shoulder package we will also include some trap work in this series.

Our Tools for the beam!

So, what kind of tools will we use to build the pillars of our physique?

There are three basic types of exercises for the shoulders; laterals, presses and upright rows. But these three can bring about numerous variations!

Shoulder Raises

Raises involve lifting your extended arm upward in a wide arc. Remember all three heads work together, but one portion of a deltoid head strains more than the other two dependants upon where the weight is in the shoulder's range of motion. For this reason we will need to do raises to the front, to the side, and to the rear for complete development.

Raises involve completely isolating the various heads of the shoulders, and are paramount for total shoulder development. Raises are also great for pre-exhausting various deltoid heads so that a particular head will come to failure first in a compound shoulder movement.

[But keep in mind, the main purpose of a shoulder raise is to completely isolate portions of the deltoids total range of motion.](#)

Presses

Shoulder pressing exercises are the primary power deltoid movement! The position of the shoulders during a press allows you to exert maximal force from the deltoid region over its full range of motion. Exhausting your shoulders in this manner is the type of hardcore work your delts will demand for hypertrophy.

Because you are straightening your arms as well as pushing upward, presses not only heavily involve the deltoids but require a lot of secondary emphasis on the triceps along with other stabilizing muscles. So, pressing exercises are generally referred to as compound shoulder movements. When done in the seated position, presses can't be pushed up with leg strength, so you should expect to use 10-20 percent less weight than the poundages you can easily handle for a set of any form of standing press.

You can vary the stress on your shoulders to direct it toward the different deltoid heads by doing different kinds of angled presses and also through pre-exhaustion with laterals.

Upright rows

This is genuinely one of the best upper body exercises ever invented!

It stresses the shoulder muscles quite hard, as well as the trapezius, biceps and forearms.

These are essentially the squat of shoulder width. There are many variations including dumbbell upright rows, barbell upright rows, EZ bar upright rows, and cable upright rows, with each of these having multiple variations of their own!

Remember earlier when I said the ideal shoulder complex should also be completely separated from the muscles of the upper arm, along with the trapezius and upper back muscles? The upright row is renowned for achieving this look.

Architectural plans for constructing a solid structured beam of WAR!

It is my belief that any sound body building shoulder workout will include a variation of all three of these basic types of movements; raises, presses, and upright rows, within some variation of their theme.

However, I want to emphasize that an excellent workout is not limited to just the correct array of exercises, shocks, sets, and reps. A hardcore workout has to be moved out of the limiting physical reality, and into the fathoms of the mental actuality!

You are the only one that can make *your* cycle successful! It's all about *your* decision to "make it" or "break it" in the weight room.

Are you just going to go into the gym, go through the motions, leave, and make no progress? Or are you going in with the championship mentality of not leaving until you've boldly gone where you have never gone before! Don't settle for the same old pain or for the past victories.

This can type of attitude can only be achieved in the mind. Pain and victory are a mental response to physical stimulus. Apply the mind over matter principle and convince yourself that you will ascend above both and bring yourself to realize new definitions of pain and victory over the next eight weeks, no matter the cost.

Settle only for a new threshold of pain, and a new meaning of victory with each and every workout...

I'll leave you with Chris Dickerson's philosophy of body building, from "Body Building, The Weider Approach".

"A proper mental approach is essential, because your mind literally controls your body. The mental outlook of any champion body builder going into a competition is consistently super positive. Each champion has already rehearsed his victory in his mind a thousand times. He is so sure he is going to win that the actual act of winning is often somewhat of an anticlimax. It's merely a matter of playing out the scenario before the audience.

I'm no different from any other champion in this respect. I spend hours visualizing my victories, seeing myself in vivid detail the way I expect to look onstage. And this visualization allows my subconscious mind to help me look and act like I imagine

myself to be. As long as my image is totally positive, I end up being completely positive myself. And I win again and again in reality, just as I've already won again and again in my imagination."

I understand that many of us may have no intentions of competing, but I think we can all learn from this mental approach to body building that Chris thrived on. And in a sense we are all competing with ourselves, so I've found that this frame of mind can apply to any body building career!

Visualization, attitude, and mentality, are the real keys to building bigger shoulders and all around better physiques! The champions of yore and the present thrive on it, so should we!

Under Construction- Boulder Shoulders!

I believe that by applying the above philosophy and assembling it into a shoulder construction workout, while also incorporating the specialization principle, will result in shoulder muscles that will not only grow like weeds, but will cause all three heads to grow in eye pleasing proportion to one another.

Now that we have the war-worthy blue prints for building a set of cannon ball delts, let's hit the gym and give homeostasis the cold shoulder!

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