

## Building the Ultimate Back!



Researched and Composed by Adam "Old School" Knowlden

### Getting the "V" Shape!

With summer quickly approaching, it's time to show the world that we've paid our dues in the gym. What better way to do so than showing off the infamous "V" back shape that everyone recognizes as the trademark of a body builder. The back is the most domineering muscle on the body, and requires serious training in the gym to develop. I'm not going to lie, these workouts are tough, but you'll soon learn what it takes to get a huge back. I will promise you however, that if you pay your dues in the gym, and stick to your nutrition you're going to make unbelievable gains with this program! So, strap yourself in cause the following workouts are going to make your lats spread like eagle wings!

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***" You'll never hear a judge complain that a back is too big! "***

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### The Purpose of this Program

This program is designed to add maximum thickness and width to the entire back complex. Over the next twelve weeks, we will attack this region from tons of different angles, to better ensure the development of a full and complete back. Like Nasser El Sobanty says, "You'll never hear a judge complain that a back is too big". The program will take this to heart and put you on the path to a barn door sized back! When completed you will not only have added serious mass but will continue to make great gains due to the better mind-to-muscle connection you will have with your back.

### The Mind-Muscle Connection

This vital connection is perhaps the main reason so many bodybuilders suffer in the back department.

It's easy to understand why. For unlike biceps, you can't see this area while you're working it. This is why it becomes even more crucial to learn how to achieve the coveted mind-muscle connection if you are to complete your quest for a large, muscular back.

### **So, what is the mind-to-muscle link?**

Simply put, it is the connection between your brain / nervous system and your muscles; what your body uses to make your muscles work. Whenever you lift a weight, the lift starts with the brain consciously directing the muscles to push or pull in a specific direction. This message, coming from the brain, is transported to the muscles by the nervous system( a series of nerves, spinal cord etc. ). When the muscles receive the signal, they respond by pulling or pushing in the way the brain directs them. This connection between the brain and the muscles, is what is known as the mind-muscle connection. Messages sent from the brain to the muscles are transmitted by nerve impulses. The strength, amount, and frequency of these nerve impulses, are a huge factor of how much force you can apply in any given lift.

In essence, by strengthening the mind-to-muscle link with your back, you can achieve optimal gains from the workouts listed in this program because you will have greater control over the area being worked.

### **How to Build a Mind-Muscle Link with the Back**



**Front Lat Spread**

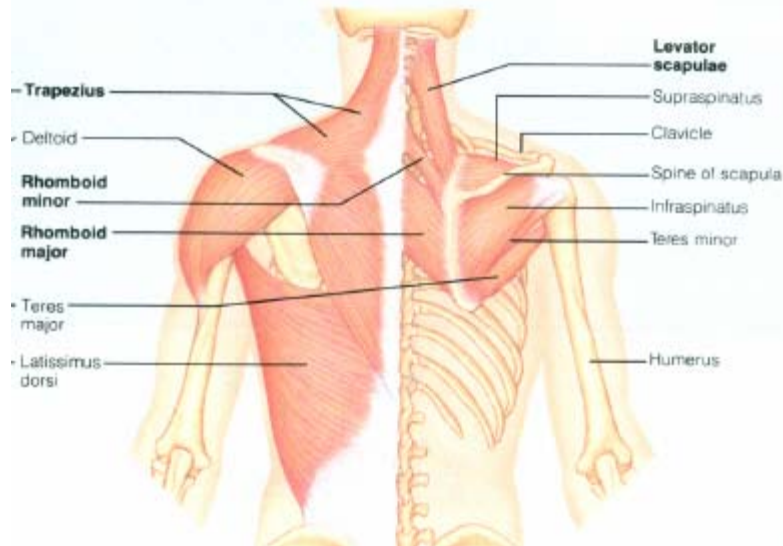
**Back Double Biceps**

**Rear Lat Spread**

Perhaps the single best way, next to actually working the back, is posing. Various lat and back poses, will teach you how to keep your back tight through flexing, and help you learn to squeeze your back muscles harder during a lift. I would suggest any back pose that you feel the best contraction from. I recommend mastering the front and rear lat pose (emphasizing your lat spread), for lat width, and the double back biceps pose for thickness and detail. Above are pictures of these three poses. Utilize this posing technique as you perform various back movements. For example as you perform lat pull downs, imagine you are hitting a double back biceps pose. If you are just starting into bodybuilding, practice these back poses twice per day. This will inevitably put you on the fast track to huge lats. I also suggest everyone flexes their back hard after a good set, and of course

stretch hard between and before sets. You will also build a better mind-muscle link through working the muscle properly. The correct form will better establish this connection. As you do any kind of back exercises try to think of your arms more as hooks, rather than being used in pulling the weight. Pull hard with your back muscles, and force them to take the brunt of the load. Proper technique will yield greater gains, and ensure safe training.

### **Anatomy of the Back and how to Make it Work for You!**



Three main muscles characterize the back complex: These are the latisimus dorsi, rhomboids (upper/middle back), and erector spinae (lower back). These three muscles, along with smaller supporting muscles deep beneath the skin's surface, play a huge role in almost everything you do!

**Latisimus Dorsi:** The Latisimus Dorsi runs along the sides of your back and is most commonly called the lats. Your lats help you extend, rotate, and pull your arms to your body (adduction). The lats play a huge role in pulling activities such as climbing and rowing.

**Erector Spinae:** This Runs along the lower part of the spine, and often referred to as the lower back. Your lower back supports your upper body, extending your spine and flexing it to either side, a part of almost every activity imaginable.

**Rhomboids (Major and Minor):** Compact muscles located a few inches down from the neck, between the spine and shoulder blades, referred to as the upper/middle back. The rhomboids' primary function is to retract, elevate and rotate the shoulder blades.

### **Warming-up The Back, for an Injury Free Workout**

This is a crucial step to any hardcore back workout. My general philosophy for warming up this area is to start out with a few sets of back extensions and some stretching to loosen up the back. Nothing drastic on the extensions here, just get the blood flowing. Emphasize stretching out the lats, and the lower back hard.

For the first two exercises in all these routines, warm-up first with a light set using higher reps (15-20). Rest a minute, then warm-up again with a semi-heavy set of 4 or 5 reps. Do not go to failure on any of these warm-up sets. The key is to just get a feel for the movement, and a good stretch. The light set will get a mild pump going, and help your body prepare for the technique. The semi-heavy set (about 60% of the weight you'll be using for your first working set), will get your body ready for the hardcore training. The first two exercises of each routine are the real mass builders, and after completing them your back should be thoroughly warmed up, and you shouldn't have to further this process for any of the remaining exercises. By keeping the routine going, you will also decrease the likelihood of injury. In other words, don't rest more than a minute or two between sets (three minutes at the most, and this is only after a draining exercise, like dead lifts). By doing this the blood will stay in the selected region, and the back won't go "cold".

### **My Philosophy on Building The Ultimate Back:**

**Sets:** In this workout, I only recommend a number of sets. But of course, the total number of sets, you include is up to you. I suggest beginners to bodybuilding, only perform the first three exercises in each routine, and only three sets per exercise. For intermediates and advanced perform the whole routine, with all the 13 sets included. Personally, I prefer higher volume for back, with heavy weights. I may do four sets of each exercise mentioned in the workouts. The sets I give are only a model, nothing set in stone. Just adjust for your type or level of conditioning.

**Reps:** I like lower reps for the back, with heavy weight. If I perform any kind of drop set or strip set for my back movements, I always make sure initial failure comes at 6 to 8 reps. However, shocking methods aside, I recommend your reps be in a range of 6-12, for maximum hypertrophy.

**Rest:** You need adequate rest to make quality gains from your workouts. Believe me though, if you are at 100% intensity with these workouts, you won't be complaining about the rest time! Personally, I like working a muscle group out once per week, but I would suggest a minimal five days of rest before doing the next workout. Also, I train back on a day by itself. I don't train biceps and forearms afterwards. If I had a hardcore back workout, there is no way I can put 100% into my bis or forearms. However, this is my preference. For those whose biceps grow easier on the back/bis/forearm split, then I suggest doing this. I prefer to train bis and forearms on a day by themselves. If you have noticed your biceps plateau easily, you may want to try this way out for a while. By prioritizing my biceps, and giving them the high intensity they deserve, I've seen tons of new gains. From time to time I will train biceps with back, as a way of shocking my body. However, I've noticed this way of training plateaus quick for me. But this can be a good shock technique!

**Logging your progress:** I suggest writing down the weights and reps you used for the first two exercises in each routine. This way as you repeat the program you can assess your gains in strength and conditioning.

### **Rear Delts and Traps:**

I alternate from training rear deltoids on back day and shoulder day. The rear delts are stressed heavily on any type of rowing movement. A great way of hitting the rear delts is simply to super set a row movement with a rear delts movement. For example, super set barbell rows with bent-over dumbbell laterals, or machine rows with reverse peck deck flys. I usually include one superset rear delt movement in my back routine, then a rear delt exercise by itself at the end of the workout. Also, I like to alternate between working traps on back day and on shoulder day. The reason being is that the traps tie into both, so essentially you can train traps with either delts or back. I'm always up for shocking my body and changing my routines around. This way I can break plateaus, and keep my workouts interesting and challenging (the two ingredients to consistent growth). Building this complex takes a lot of hard work and dedication! But, in my opinion nothing beats the feeling of conquering a back workout! With this in mind, [click here](#) to enter my 12 week barn door back massacre!

Sincerely,

Adam "Old School" Knowlden