

## **Shock Your Body Out Of THE COMFORT ZONE PART III!**

Researched and Composed by Adam "Old School" Knowlden

### **We've won the battle, but we still haven't won the WAR!**

Last month we covered some great tactics in making war against our mortal enemy homeostasis. Homeostasis is our mortal foe as it is one of the key factors that will literally halt muscle growth in its tracks!

Up to this point we have covered supersets, cheat reps, double negatives, and static supersets. These are all great tools for defeating the enemy, but we still have a lot of tricks up our sleeves! Last month we attacked the body with a fleet of tanks, destroying muscle fibers with various supersets and other hardcore tactics. This month we're going to get medieval, and stab the enemy where it hurts! With sheer brutality and pain!

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### **The Medieval knight, a formidable foe!**

During medieval times nothing struck fear into the heart of the enemy like a fully armored knight. During their reign in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, these bands of chain-mailed clad den knights galloped across the land and were masters of warfare. They were truly awesome to see, even more so with their great cylindrical helmets which protected their head, and the heraldic creeds written in bold letters on their shields and linen surcoats. Their skills with the lance and sword were legendary. Being in the sights of an armored warrior almost certainly meant impending doom!

### **The Knights fall from Glory...**

The knight must have seemed like an immortal foe with their heavy armor, incredible warfare tactics, and mastery over the lance and sword.

But once again, ingenuity conquers all!

The knights who once dominated medieval warfare became increasingly vulnerable as weapons became more sophisticated. The Bowman found a deadly new weapon in the crossbow, which fired arrows or short, steel-tipped bolts with enormous power, piercing the strongest of armors. The halberd, a combined spear and battleaxe, could wrench a knight from his saddle and then hack him to pieces as he lay on the ground. Infantrymen embedded sharp wooden poles in the ground, to form a barrier to cavalry, and foot soldiers learned to whirl war flails (a form of grass-threshing tool) with deadly effect!

### **Homeostasis' fall from glory!**

Just like these warriors fell from glory, so too will homeostasis. No longer will you face plateaus in your training, but instead will learn how to make your body submit to your bidding! This issue is designed to give you the weapons of warfare that will enable you to knock homeostasis off its high horse and force it to yield to your every whim!

Instead of the deadly cross bow, I will demonstrate how to use the descending set principle to pierce through the toughest armor! And to replace the halberd, you will have pre-exhaustion to render the knight's armor useless. This article will also teach you how to use a simple shock like rest-pause pyramiding, comparable to barrier-like wooden poles, to knock the enemy flat on his face and induce super growth! And lastly, drop-level static negatives will knock the immortal knight off his horse and bring him down to your level! With that picture painted let's learn about the weapons of war!

### **Descending sets, the armor piercers!**

The descending set has to be the most vicious of all shock techniques. In fact, I would go as far to say that the descending set is equal to the super set in terms of growth and the overall barbaric shock it provides to the body! I can think of no other technique that will take you as far into the pain zone as these will. Needless to say, hardcore sets that incorporate the descending principle can be down right sadistic!

The concept behind the drop set is straightforward yet lethal. To apply the descending principle to a set, simply go to complete failure with any given exercise. Now, upon completion of the set reduce the weight of the exercise as quickly as possible and continue on with the set.

This offers many benefits for a bodybuilder. In essence you are going beyond what your muscles could have achieved by only going to initial failure. Descending sets offer the same awesome results as forced reps do. In fact they are almost the same thing except they are forced reps that are done without a spotter.

The other benefit is that the more you descend the more you will be stimulating the deepest muscle fibers in your body. The final reps of a hardcore drop will burn so deep, it will feel as if someone is putting a blowtorch on your muscles!

As your reward for making it through, you will be getting a blood pump that is out of this universe, along with increased mitochondria in your muscles. In fact if you have never used the principle in your life, you're going to be hurting in places you didn't even know there were muscles!

Most prefer the weight be reduced within 30% to 50% of the original weight used. This is the most basic definition.

The descending set can also be referred to as either a drop set or a strip set.

For example, if I were doing dumbbell curls, and wanted to apply the descending set principle, I would go to failure with 50lb. dumbbells and literally drop the dumbbells and pick up a pair of lighter ones to continue on with the set.

Another variation of this is called "running the rack". My favorite illustration of this is used for either front raises or side laterals. Basically you select your first weight and keep going down the dumbbell rack until you have completed your goal/set amount of descents! Of course I usually do this when the gym is slow.

Additionally, strip sets are one form of the descending set principle that delivers great results. Let's take the bench press to demonstrate this. I could go to failure with the original weight and then strip off some of the weight to continue the set. Let's say I was doing 225 lb. bench presses and wanted to up the intensity. I could go to failure, then strip off a 45lb. plate from each side and go to failure again.

The strip set principle can also be used for cable exercises and cable machines. Simply pull the pin out after failure and place it at a lighter weight and continue the set.

Both of these are still descending sets, but are just different variations of the theme.

### **What are we in....WARFARE!**

And that is literally the mentality you are going to have to be in to apply these techniques that I am going to describe in this article! Before using these techniques I highly recommend re-reading Jacob's "[So you want to be Freaky](#)" article before you go on.

If you have never used the drop set shock principle before I recommend only sticking to the basic definition I gave above for your first year of training. In other words only 1 drop and a decrease between 30 and 50 percent of the original weight. For the intermediates and advanced bodybuilders, implement the following tactics into your routine as you see fit for your level of training. The techniques get a little advanced as they go down the page.

#### *Descending set shock 1- Double, Triple, or Quadruple drop sets*

This is the principle most are familiar with. The idea behind it is you go to failure with any given exercise, and then drop the weight. That's one drop. Go to failure again, drop the weight and continue on. That's a double drop set. Go to failure again, drop the weight and continue yet again. There you have a triple drop set. The process can go on and on for as many as you like. This is the most simplistic way of doing strip sets, yet its effectiveness has been proven time and time again!

*Multiple Pins trick* - I like to apply a little trick that I have found to be highly effective for cable strip sets.

Go to your local sports store and purchase some of the pins that are similar to the ones used in the machines at your gym. The reason why is because you will need three or four and you don't want to hog all the ones at the gym. Now, for example let's say you wanted to apply the double drop set technique to a bench press cable machine. Normally, you would do your set, pull the pin and select the next weight and put the pin back in. However, this often takes too much time as you have to pull the pin, think about the weight, and then reinsert it. To eliminate this problem set one of the pins at your heaviest weight, one at your next drop, one at your next drop

and so on. Just pull the bottom one out when you are done with that part of the drop and continue on. This decreases the turnover time between drops, increasing the intensity of the exercise as you don't have to take the time to put the pin back in.

### Descending set shock 2- "Total reps"

This is one of my favorite ways of performing drop sets. Simply pick a number of reps you want to complete and don't stop doing drop sets until you get there! I especially like this tactic for beating all of the different muscle fibers into submission!

For example, let's say I want increased size, vascularity, peak, and hardness in my quads. Instead of just using the standard double or triple drop set principle, I focus on a number of reps that will be completed and get my mind totally fixated on that number. Let's say for this set that number is 40 reps. I want the kind of mindset where I totally forget about how many drops I'm going to do, and just focus on the fact that I have to reach that number no matter what!

This may take 10 drops it doesn't matter, in fact I don't pre-plan or count drops as I'm going. The number of drops doesn't matter, only the final reps completed by the end of the set. If you feel like going heavy, start with a heavy weight where initial failure is 5 reps. That's perfectly fine, just know you have 35 more reps to go, and you won't stop till you get there! I find it's much easier to concentrate and focus on blocking out the pain when you don't have a million things going on in your head. This technique expands on that and just gives you one number to think about.

I really like to incorporate this variation to coincide with the information Jacob wrote about in the Anatomy section of the site.

Take from: Muscle Fibers Part II, by Jacob Wilson

*"2. They allow you to target all three muscle fiber types to their full potential in one fail swoop. Think of it this way, an 8 repetition set may not give you a complete stimulus in your fast twitch fibers. By stripping the weight, you almost ensure complete stimulation across the board. You may also manipulate sets in ways that would be impossible any other way! For example, let's say you wanted to go extremely heavy and super high rep at the same time. Or if you wanted to combine the positive aspects of low rep sets with those of high rep sets. You could easily lift a weight that causes you to fail in the 5 repetition range, and then strip to another weight you can only lift 5 reps on, and so on and so forth! Furthermore, compound sets release hormones on a wider response, where as isolation exercises release specific hormones for the particular muscle group worked. By combining a heavy compound with an isolation you will get the best of both worlds. I can go on and on, but it is for this reason that I write entire articles on shocking methods. (You will also see that they are exceptional at creating density in mitochondria)."*

This backs up what I just said. By using this variation of the drop set you will see dramatic changes in the muscle group you apply it too! I suggest picking an exercise that you want to apply it too, and then pick a total number of reps you want to complete. Set your goal number of reps to be completed before you start the set, and stop at nothing to complete them. No matter how many drops it takes!

Next, start heavy so that initial failure comes between 4 and 6 reps, then continue to drop until you reach a high number of reps. I generally like to take my beginning number of reps and add 20 to 30 reps to it for my target amount of reps for the set.

So if I picked a weight on say cable concentration curls, where I wanted initial failure to be 5 reps, I would then add say 30 reps to that so that by the end of the set I would have completed 35 total reps! It's insane, and advanced but works like a charm!

You can also go backwards with this concept, and pick initial failure to occur at a high number of reps, say 15, and then continue to add weight, so that as you approach your target amount of reps, you are actually getting fewer reps as you drop down. This is a great way to flush the muscles you are working.

#### Descending set shock 3- "Don't stop 'till you drop!"

This variation of the descending set will test your pain margins to the limit! In fact pain is all that will guide you with this one. Don't think about reps or how many drops you are going to do. Just go until you can't take it anymore. The further you go into hell the more gains you will get.

This is ultra effective for the calves and forearms. In fact, I've gone weeks without even counting reps for these two groups. I just go by how much pain I felt the previous workout and know that I will go further in my current one! This type of training gives you a certain mindset that will build you a great physique! I like it because it allows you to focus completely on the pain zone, and not distracting your mind with counting any reps, sets, drops, just more intensity than you've ever had before.

#### Descending set shock 4- "30-60 seconds rule"

The "Count to 60 seconds and grow, man, grow" article Jacob wrote in a previous issue has to be one of the best ever in terms of inducing muscle growth! If you haven't read it yet it is in December's issue. In summary of that article, muscles grow best when they are subjected to sets that make them come to failure within a range of 30-70 seconds. Once again I love this cause it gets you out of the "rep" state of mind. This "rep" state of mind can actually trick your mind into thinking you are fatigued when you're really not! **It gets you out of the rep mentality and into the pain reality!** And the pain reality is what separates the advanced hardcore bodybuilder from rest!

Just set your stop watch and step into the pain dimension! The results were so amazing, I started applying it to the drop set principle and got some serious results!

To do this select a weight that you will fail in before the allotted time. Let's say I wanted to do a 60 second standing leg curls. I would select a weight that I would fail at around 20-25 seconds. I usually try to select a weight that will give me failure at about 1/3 of the total time. Once I reached that time, I would continue the set using drops until I got to 60 seconds! It's insanely ruthless, but I've been using it regularly and I love the results! This is a 5 star tactic!

All of these different variations should be used from time to time. To keep the variety up, I'll usually focus on one variation for a week, and then switch to another variation of the descending set theme. This will teach you to build up your intensity and mental stamina, along with helping to spice up your workouts.

Here are some of my favorite exercises for utilizing the descending set principle:

Squat- All I can say about this is that only the strong survive!

Wide-grip upright rows- If you want cannon ball shaped delts try these on for size! If you plan on using these as part of your normal routine, don't buy any shirts for awhile, because they won't fit for long!

Bench press- All the different angles works great. If a certain area of your chest is in a slump, these will catch it up in a big way! I noticed these really help carve that line in the upper chest when utilizing the incline barbell or dumbbell press!

Barbell curl and extensions- Take your arms to new dimensions of mass!

Calf raises and forearm curls and extensions- Try applying the "Don't stop till you drop" variation of drop sets for these! They add thickness and size to the calves and forearms in a big time way!

### **Rest-Pause pyramiding – Stabbing failure in the face!**

Incorporating rest-pause training into your sets is like telling your muscles "You bastards are gonna grow whether you like it or not!" You are literally spitting in the face of failure, and pushing the envelope to the max!

To use rest-pause, simply perform your set to failure, rest or pause briefly then continue again. The typical time to pause is around 5 to 10 seconds. This will take some experience to feel, but as your mind to muscle links increase you will begin to "feel" when your muscles have slightly recovered and can be subjected to a few extra reps.

For an example of this, let's take seated military presses. You are going to complete 10 reps with 225 lbs. at all costs, even though your previous weeks max was only 225lbs at 7 reps. You begin your set and just like last week, come to failure at 7 reps. Now, utilizing rest-pause, you set the bar back down, wait 10 seconds then un-rack the bar and manage to eek out 2 more reps. Tired you re-rack the bar wait 10 seconds, and go again. This time you manage to barely get that last rep. There you have it you completed your 10 reps, and have totally exhausted your deltoids! The beauty of this method is that it can be applied to any exercise to expose your muscles to more reps than it has previously been used to, and literally force it to adapt to them.

Now that you have the basics of rest-pause down I'm going to introduce you to rest-pause pyramiding! This technique is going to make you hate me. In fact you will be cursing my name through the whole set! That's fine though, I understand, I tend to curse myself the next day for doing it, yet the results make me continue to come back for more!

The idea behind it is similar to the pyramid system you use in regular weights. However instead of reps we will use seconds. Each set will consist of 3-5 mini-sets (you can lower how many rests you do based on your level of training). The basics behind it is go to failure, wait 10 seconds then go again. Rest 15 seconds and go again. Rest 20 seconds and go again. Continue in this manner, counting by 5's until you reach a final rest period of 30 seconds.

Rest-pause pyramiding is one of my favs, especially for mass exercises! It will allow you to take a set way beyond failure and expose the deepest muscle fibers to hardcore balls to the wall training! Let's take the Leg press and apply this principle.

**WARNING:** This is no joke. If you aren't a little insane don't even try this. If you can make it through however, you will understand what it takes to build Bohemian legs!

Begin by selecting a weight that will make you go to failure at around 10-12 reps. Lets say this week you are going to focus your leg training around your quadriceps. This can better be achieved by placing your feet low and close together on the leg press' foot plate. Now, press off and go for good form and squeeze your quads hard at the top. Don't just bounce the bar off the bottom, and lift it 2 inches. I see so many guys load up the leg press with 12 plates on both sides and do the sloppiest reps I've ever seen.

Trust me unless you're an Olympic power lifter or a 250 lb. bodybuilder, no one is paying attention to your weight. It's more important to get a good contraction and to focus on making your legs go to total exhaustion. This can be accomplished by getting a good range of motion and going slow on the descent. The only cheating that is safe for the leg press is called knee pushing. In other words, after failure you can literally push your legs up and force it through the lifting part of the lift. Then of course emphasize the negative. To accomplish this form of a cheat rep I push right on the bottom of my quadriceps and squeeze the sides of my knee caps for stabilization. Other than that, strict form will get the best results on the leg press.

Once you reach failure of the initial weight, re-rack the load and count to 10(This should be roughly 10 seconds-so a medium paced 10 count). As soon as you reach a 10 count lift off again, and go to failure once more. Don't count reps anymore. You need to totally focus on breaking the pain barrier. Go to failure, re-rack the weight, and rest again. This time count to 15 and then un-rack the weight right away and proceed to go to failure again. This is when the pain will really start setting in. Only a true warrior will be able to go further! Re-rack and repeat in this manner until you reach the final mini-set in which you rest 30 seconds, then proceed to go to failure a final time. It's a simple concept, but if you put all your intensity in it, you will be moaning in pain, and will have tears coming out of your eyes and sweat running out of every pore in your body!

In summary, rest-pause pyramiding utilizes the same concept as rest-pausing, except instead of just the normal 5-10 seconds you are pyramiding the rest time up. The rest scheme looks like this: 10-15-20-25-30. In which you will take each mini-set to utter and total failure! Or, as the case when you start reaching the 20 second ranges, the pain is too much to bear!

One other addition I wanted to make to rest-pause training is that you can combine it with the descending set principle for insane intensity!

Let's take variation 2- "Total reps" as an example. Again let's use the cable concentration curl as our example, with 35 reps being my final repetition goal. Let's say that I achieve my initial number of reps that I set for myself, which were 5. Now, I continue to use drop sets, until I get to the point where I am at 29 reps, and can do no more for the life of me. The problem is though that I've come down to the least amount of weight the stack offers me so I can't drop any further. However, I haven't reached my target goal of 35 reps. This can happen when you have high intensity. I would use the rest-pause shock to continue my set. Resting just long enough between reps (again approximately 5-10 seconds), so that I can muster up enough strength to squeeze out a few extra reps. I would continue to use rest-pause until I achieved my goal reps.

### **Pre and Post exhaustion- Wielding the Halberd!**

If you are looking to build your body into a suit of armor, then these are the two shocks for you! Pre and post exhaust will literally let you take a mass exercise and let you use it to create both size and symmetry! Like I talked a little about in last month's issue, nothing adds size like compound exercises. Sometimes, however, it can be added in the wrong places.

#### *Pre-exhaustion-*

I think the most classic case of this has to be the flat bench press. This exercise can easily overstress the front deltoids and make them come to failure way before the pecs actually do. Pre-exhaustion allows you to directly target the spot you want the mass exercise to blast.

By performing an isolation exercise before a mass exercise (see last month's issue to get a clearer understanding of what a mass and isolation exercise is) you can shift the focus of the compound exercise to the area just trained. The isolation lift pre-stresses a specific muscle of a mass exercise.

Again, let's take the bench press. If I was to perform 3 or 4 sets of strict dumbbell or cable flys, then follow that up with the bench press, I would focus the stress of the bench press onto my pecs and not my delts or tris! The reason this works is that flys will pre-stress the pecs, so that they fail before the delts or tris do. In essence you would have narrowed the focus of the bench press or compound exercises!

Pre-exhaust can also be used to target certain areas of a muscle, for example, upper lats, middle chest, or inner thighs. Let's say I wanted more height on my bicep peaks, but barbell curls seem to make my lower biceps fail first and I don't feel like my peaks are getting enough emphasis placed on them with this exercise.

One of my favorite combos of all time for accomplishing this task is three sets of barbell concentration curls followed by barbell curls! The concentration curls will blast the peaks, and the barbell curls will assure that the peaks come to failure first in the exercise, as opposed to the lower biceps.

This is the most common form of pre-exhaust. Go right into the gym when your intensity is highest, perform a few sets of an isolation exercise for your lagging area and follow it up with a mass exercise. This works incredibly, but there are other

variations to keep your body guessing! And that is the whole point behind a shock; it needs to keep your body guessing to keep it growing!

Enter supersets. I could make this method even more hardcore by starting my pre-exhaustion routine with a super set of an isolation exercise with an isolation exercise. Then follow that up with my 3 or 4 sets of a mass exercise!

I personally feel that this variation of the pre-exhaust principle is most lethal at destroying lagging muscle group's stubbornness. Let's say my rear delts have been lagging the last few months. Try this out. Bring some dumbbells over to the peck deck station. Begin by doing bent-over dumbbell laterals, and superset that with reverse peck decks for three sets. Now, do some barbell rows, dead lifts, and seated cable rows! All of these utilize the rear delts so much that they will be forced to work extra hard to keep up. You will get some serious growth in this region.

This technique can also be applied to upper pecs. This is another hard to hit area. Try starting out with some incline flys supersetted with incline peck deck.

For the incline flys I like to vary the angle on the bench with each set so that I stimulate the upper pec region's muscles a little bit different for each set. For example do set one at 30 degrees, set two at 35 degrees, and set three at 40 degrees.

To make the peck deck hit the upper chest region more, lower the seat or grab the handle bars up high. You can use either way just make sure that your pinky finger is aligned with the top of your chest when your hands cross over. Do three sets in that fashion.

Now do dips, incline bench, and flat dumbbells! BAM! The upper chest is toast! This concept can be applied to any lagging part to force it to work harder than it has previously been exposed to! This will most deficiently yield new gains in muscle!

In this instance let's take forearms! Hammer curls are without a doubt one of the most effective forearm builders, yet often times the biceps can fail before the forearms and grip actually do! Before doing the hammer curls I could do three supersets of over a bench reverse wrist curls with over a bench regular wrist curls. This alone would pump the forearms up to the max! Now try doing standing hammer curls! OUCH! You'll soon see the effectiveness of this shock!

Another one of my favorites is the adductor machine supersetted with the abductor machine for three sets, topped off with 3 or 4 sets of lunges! No pain, no gain!

Also for 3-D delts try dumbbell L-laterals supersetted with dumbbell side laterals to pre-exhaust the side delts, then seated dumbbell presses!

Since we are talking about supersets, I'll go ahead and tell you about instant pre-exhaustion! To apply these just perform an isolation exercise supersetted with a mass exercise! One of the all time classics has to be leg extensions supersetted with squats! Its down-right sadistic! But the return for the investment is thunder thighs of steel! Another favorite of mine is barbell front raises (or use an ez curl bar if it's too

much weight) supersetted with the seated military press! See my article last month for more crazy combos in this category!

One other form of pre-exhaustion I like is rep schemes. By varying the reps you can utilize this principle in a unique way!

Try following a high rep set of isolation exercises with a low rep set of mass exercises targeting the same area! Let's take the hamstrings for this one!

Try doing 20 reps on the leg curl machine, and follow that up with 6 reps on the leg press machine! You can more effectively target this tough to hit region with this shock. If you place your feet high on the foot plate of the leg press, you will isolate the hammies even further.

You can even do this in an opposite manner for a rare shock. Try doing 8 reps on the leg extension machine, then perform a set of squats where you don't reach failure for 15 reps! Or for traps try 6 reps of seated shrugs followed by 15 reps of close-grip upright rows! You'll love that one! (But hate me for suggesting it!)

#### *Post-exhaustion-*

Post-exhaustion works in the same manner as pre-exhaustion except that you perform the mass exercise first followed by the isolation exercise.

This allows you to literally carve in the details of your armor. The mass exercises will make the mold, and then the isolation exercises give you the chisels to carve in the details. In other words instead of just having a large plate on the front, you can use post-exhaustion to carve out the pecs, and make the mass of metal into a battle-ready chest plate!

For instance let's take the pecs again. I could simply reverse the order of the previous workout and do dips, incline bench, and flat dumbbell presses, then top that off with three sets of incline flies supersetted with incline peck decks.

Or I could leave the super set aspect out of it, and do say Squats, Leg press, Lunges and lying leg curls, to make sure my hamstrings were totally taxed at the end of my leg workout.

I especially like the following concept for cutting. I will superset a mass exercise with a mass exercise, then follow that up with 3 or 4 isolation exercises to literally etch in the striations!

I love this for the shoulders! Try super setting three sets of standing dumbbell upright rows with seated dumbbell presses. Now follow that up with side laterals, cable front raises, and one-arm bent over dumbbell laterals! This will put extreme separation in all of the three heads of the deltoid region!

Post-exhaustion is a rare form of a shock, but I guarantee you will see major changes when you begin implementing it! And you power lifting freaks will really dig it! Just remember post-exhaustion is pretty much the opposite of pre-exhaustion in that you are hammering a muscle in isolation at the end of a workout instead of the

beginning. They are opposites but the concept is the same; a super shock to the body!

One of the hardest things in bodybuilding is learning how to direct the stress of a mass exercise to a particular muscle. Pre and post exhaustion allow you to do this in a unique way, so that you will reap the rewards of mass gains from movements like the squat, bench, and dead lift without the unevenness they tend to create! Like I said in the previous article, size is a lot, but it isn't everything in bodybuilding. You have to have freaky size, freaky symmetry, and freaky detail to be the total package. These two shocks will take you one step close to achieving that kind of physique!

### **Drop-Level Static Negatives: Advanced Shock of the month!**

When you say you are hardcore, do you really mean it? Or is it just something you say? This will tell you if you are worthy of the hardcore title.

This shock is so intense that you will not only knock the knight off his mighty horse, but will also make him say, "Uncle" as he lays at your feet! If you have been struggling with a particular area of your physique then drop-level static negatives are going to be your salvation!

Drop-level static negatives incorporate the beauty of negatives and the intensity of static reps. When using this shock you will be over-emphasizing the negative, which as you know, educes serious muscle growth. And simultaneously applying the static rep theory in a unique way.

To explain the concept behind this let's use the infamous barbell curl. No one can dispute the exercises' ability to add heaps of muscle to the bicep region.

You would begin your reps just like normal for the concentric, or positive, portion of the lift. The negative portion is what we are interested in.

As you go through the range of motion for the negative you will statically hold the barbell at different levels as you lower the bar.

Remember for static holds you have to squeeze the muscle hard and really emphasize holding it in its place. I like to think of my muscles as cornerstones to a bridge! Unmovable!

So, on the negative portion of the lift I would go down  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way down, hold the barbell statically and proceed with the negative again, go another  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way through the range of motion and hold the barbell in a static state. Again I would go through another  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way through the motion and hold the barbell statically. Finally, I would hold the barbell just short of lock out and hold the barbell in a static manner until failure.

I tend to hold each level drop for 2-5 seconds, and then slowly descend until I get to the next drop level.

You can divide up how many levels you want to statically hold depending on the intensity you want to give the exercise or if there is a specific area you want to develop. I would say to go for a minimum of two levels and a maximum of six.

Try these exercise out utilizing the drop-level static negative super shock!

Dumbbell curls- OUCH! 'nuff said!

Incline dumbbell press- if you are having a hard time felling your upper pecs, try this variation. You will definitely feel the upper pecs being strained to the max!

Old School extensions with a barbell- If you are hardcore enough, massive tris await you with this one!

Standing Calf Raises- Shred up your calves through their whole range of motion.

Leg curls and Extensions- Bring out all the details in these regions by squeezing hard at every drop!

Shoulder presses and Upright rows- Give your delts a new twist in their plane of motion by incorporating these exercises with drop-level static negs!

Lat pull downs and Chins- Thought your back was big? These will humble you in a hurry!

I hear some of you asking, "Hey Old School, how can I up the intensity on these?"

OK, so you maybe you are hardcore! Upping the intensity of this shock is not only possible, but will test your manhood.

One of my personal favorite ways to increase the insanity of drop-level static negatives is by taking a set to failure, then cheating the weight up and just focusing on the negative portion. You will notice however that you will have to decrease the amount of levels you can complete as you cheat more and more reps out.

So if you were doing barbell curls and were doing six drop-levels with your regular sets, you will probably have to drop down to only two levels by the time you cheat out your second rep. That's fine. It's a way of doing a pyramid scheme with this technique, and will condition your muscles in a way only this shock can! See last months issue for more details on cheating.

Finally, try applying this concept to double negatives!

OH MAN! You're going to want to drive to Ohio, hunt me down, and beat me with a damn barbell after you try this!

As you focus on the negative, apply different static-levels for an intensity that only a mad-man can endure! What? Your left arm is lagging behind your right one? Not for much longer! Try this little trick for this common problem.

## **Wrapping it all up!**

This issue we covered descending sets, pyramid rest-pausing, pre and post exhaustion, along with drop-level static negatives. I hope this article helped add to your arsenal of weaponry in your on-going battle against homeostasis! Remember, the knight of yore, was a formidable foe, but not immortal! He could be defeated and so can your lagging body parts! Plateaus don't exist. Only pain threshold plateaus. Break the pain barrier and enter the growth zone!

Keep the hardcore scene alive!

Old School.