

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

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### **War Is Upon Us!**

Are you ready for war?

This is the question the hardcore bodybuilder must ask themselves before each and every gym session. It means pushing your body to the limit each time you set foot in the gym, to reach further than you ever have before! This article is meant to give you victory each time you wage war in the gym.

However, being ready for war, means knowing the enemy and his weaknesses.

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### **Homeostasis the Body Builder's Mortal Enemy!**

Your body is naturally resistant to change. It prefers to be in a constant state with no change to its environment. It simply does not want big, freaky muscles. You have to force this complex machine to accept them. The principle is that simple. Without the right weapons you will never even come close to pushing your body to reach its potential.

This state of stubbornness is referred to in scientific terms as homeostasis. Homeostasis simply means "staying the same".

It is the goal of these series of articles to learn how to defeat the bodies desire to stay in this state!

I strongly believe that shocking principles are the number one weapon to defeat this foe!

Webster has two definitions of shock that I feel apply to this situation.

The first is, "*a sudden powerful blow*", which is exactly what shock principals deliver! They literally shatter your body's natural defenses to change!

The other definition is, "*an extreme stimulation of the nerves by the passage of electrical current through the body.*"

Shock principals are just that! A strong electrical current running wild in your body! Applying shocking techniques to your workouts is like shoving your muscles into an electric socket! The jolt will literally have your system so surprised that it will have no choice but to adapt to the stimulation with new muscle growth!

### **Don't Just Win the Battle, Win the WAR!**

However, it's important to know that shock principles can become adaptable to the body! This complex machine has the amazing ability to adjust to new environments and overcome rather quickly! This is even truer the longer you work out for. For all you long-time lifters out there, remember when you first started working out? Anything and everything worked. But as time passed your body became more stubborn to workouts and you had to find new ways to force it into growth.

If you always apply the same shock principals in the same way every workout, your body will learn how to deal with them and the growth you received from the shock initially will be reduced to minimal at best.

Just like in war. One side creates a new weapon, and the other side finds a way to counteract it. So too, does this apply to shock principals. The key is to find ways to constantly change them so the body can never adapt, and you will always come out victorious in the gym.

## **The Weapons of War**

This article will be broken down into a mini-series over the next several issues. I will be covering classic shock principals such as supersets, cheating, pre-exhaustion, forced reps, and a few others. I will also be covering some of my own, more advanced principals such as static supersets, ASDC, and drop level static negatives to name a few! It is my objective to give you everything you need to make each gym session challenging and rewarding!

With all that in mind, let's take a look at your new arsenal!

## **SUPER SETS**

### **The King of Shock!**

Supersets are probably the number one, all-star shock technique. The benefits they offer a bodybuilder are many and include, taxing more muscle fibers than a standard set, elevating growth enhancing hormones in the body, increasing mitochondrial density in the cell for more muscle energy, and perhaps the best of all, hitting the muscle from various angles for the shock of a life time!

Supersets are generally targeted at focusing on one muscle group and bringing it to the limit! They are a combination of two exercises for the same muscle group performed right after each other without pause. You can read more about the definition of a superset under the workout section of the site.

However, they can be applied for two different muscle groups, usually two oppositely working muscle groups. These are usually referred to as compound supersets.

(FYI- If you perform three exercises in a row it is referred to as Tri-sets and anything over three is referred to as Giant sets.)

### **Keeping the Super Set - Super!**

What many do not realize is how versatile the super set is, and how to use it for consistent gains.

I always hear people say, "Don't use the superset that much, or else it will lose its effectiveness, and only use it when you plateau." (Plateau just means that you have hit a sticking point in your training and you don't seem to be getting bigger)

I say use supersets to prevent plateaus from happening in the first place! These can be broken down into ways that offer limitless possibilities for combinations, and can still stay fresh so you will get constant gains!

### **Basic Rules of the Superset**

Supersets are basically broken down into two types of exercises. Mass and isolation exercises.

First let me explain what I mean by mass and isolation.

A compound movement is a exercise that involves two or more joint movements. These tend to build the most mass.

Isolated exercise involves one discernible joint movement and are used to target a muscle.

A general Weight Training Exercise Classification is as follows:

Mechanics-

Compound. Basic-Many/Auxiliary-Some  
Isolation. Basic-some/Auxiliary-many

We can also describe them as closed chain or open chain movements.

A closed chain is an exercise in which the end segment of the exercised limb is fixed, or the end is supporting the weight. Most compound exercises tend to be closed chain movements.

An open chain exercise is one in which the end segment of the exercised limb is not fixed, or the end is not supporting the weight. Most isolated exercise are open chain movements.

"Mass exercises" and "isolation exercises" however are relative terms.

I prefer to define these words in terms of power and force body production, muscular endurance, velocity of contraction, flexibility, rate of metabolism, and coordination, to determine a mass/isolation exercise, rather than technical definitions of "compound/isolation".

There are 3 basic training principles: overload, variation, and specificity. Let's examine each of these.

Overload is concerned with providing a proper stimulus for eliciting a desired

physical, physiological, or performance adaptation. Overload is exercise and training that goes beyond normal levels of physical performance. An overload stimulus will have some level of strength (intensity), frequency, and duration of application. Thus, all stimuli will have a level of intensity, relative intensity (percentage of maximum), frequency, and duration (volume).

The intensity of training is associated with the rate of performing work and the rate at which energy is expended; the volume of training is a measure or estimate of how much total work is performed and the total amount of energy expended. Intensity (and relative intensity) is provided by the amount of weight lifted, and the volume of training is related to the number of repetitions and sets per exercise; the number and types of exercises used (large- versus small-muscle mass); and the number of times per day, week, month, and so on that these exercises are repeated. Volume load (repetitions  $\times$  the mass lifted) is the best estimate of the amount of work accomplished during training.

K.C. Pierce, G.G. Haff, A.J. Koch, B.K. Schilling, and R.L. Johnson. Periodization: Effects of manipulating volume and intensity—Part 1. *Strength Conditioning*. 21:56–62. 1999.

H.S. O'Bryant, K.C. Pierce, G.G. Haff, A.J. Koch, B.K. Schilling, and R.L. Johnson. Periodization: Effects of manipulating volume and intensity—Part 2. *Strength Conditioning*. 21:54–60. 1999.

Stone, M.H., S. Plisk, M.E. Stone, B. Schilling, H.S. O'Bryant, and K.C. Pierce. Athletic performance development: Volume load—1 set vs multiple sets, training velocity and training variation. *Strength Conditioning*. 20(6):22–31. 1998.

The application of training intensity and volume can be considered both in terms of the overall workout (i.e., all exercises performed during a specified period) or in terms of individual exercises. An understanding of overload factors can aid in the choice of exercises and equipment. Although programming (i.e., sets and repetitions) for a specific exercise is independent of exercise mode, the resulting total work (accomplished per session, week, month, etc.) is not independent.

Variation is concerned with appropriate manipulation in training intensity, speed of movement, volume, and exercise selection. Appropriate variation is an important consideration for the prolongation of adaptations over continuous training programs. Furthermore, appropriate sequencing of volume; intensity; and exercise selection, including speed–strength exercises, in a periodized manner can lead to superior enhancement of a variety of performance abilities.

Kraemer, W.J. A series of studies: The physiological basis for strength training in American football: Fact over philosophy. *J. Strength Conditioning Res.* 11:131–142. 1997.

Kramer, J.B., M.H. Stone, H.S. O'Bryant, M.S. Conley, R.L. Johnson, D.C. Nieman, D.R. Honeycutt, and T.P. Hoke. Effects of single versus multiple sets of weight training: Impact of volume, intensity and variation. *J. Strength Conditioning Res.* 113:143–147. 1997.

Specificity of exercise and training is the most important consideration when selecting appropriate equipment for resistance training, especially if performance

enhancement is a primary goal. Specificity includes both bioenergetics and mechanics of training. This discussion will be concerned with mechanical specificity.

The transfer-of-training effect deals with the degree of performance adaptation that can result from a training exercise and is strongly related to specificity. Mechanical specificity refers to the kinetic and kinematic associations between a training exercise and a physical performance. This includes movement patterns, peak force, rate of force development, acceleration, and velocity parameters. The more similar a training exercise is to the actual physical performance, the greater the probability of transfer.

This is why poses must be observed, examined, and molded in during training.

Sale, D.G. Neural adaptation to strength training. In: . Strength Power in Sport. P.V. Komi, ed. London, Blackwell Scientific. 1992.pp. 249–265.

Saunders, M.T. A comparison of two methods of training on the development of muscular strength and endurance. J. Orthop. Sports Phys. Ther. Spring:210–213. 1980.

R.A. Motor Learning Performance. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1991.

Siff and Verkhoshansky refer to transfer-of-training effect as “dynamic correspondence”; that is, the basic mechanics, but not necessarily the outward appearance, of training movements should be similar to those of the athlete's sport performance. They suggest a number of considerations and performance criteria that can be used in selecting training modes (and methods) that can maximize the transfer-of-training effect.

Siff, M.C., and Y.V. Verkhoshansky. Supertraining: Strength Training for Sporting Excellence. (3rd ed.). Johannesburg, South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand. 1998.

In terms of performance, the criteria are as follows:

accentuated regions of force production

amplitude and direction of movement

dynamics of effort (i.e., static versus dynamic characteristics of the movement and appropriate power output)

rate and time of maximum force production

regime of muscular work (eccentric versus concentric muscle actions)

The fourth criteria, dealing with rate of force production, is especially important in selecting exercises for the training of explosive athletic movements. Mechanical specificity has been extensively studied as it affects strength-training exercise.

Mass Exercise - A *Mass exercise* is a lift where more than one muscle is heavily used at the same time.

These have a tendency to be exercises that tax a large portion of the body with one lift. Most lifts can be categorized as a pushing or a pulling movement. A compound exercise tends to tax all the muscles involved in either type of movement heavily. For example the bench press stresses primarily the pectorals, followed by the front delts, side delts, and the triceps. These are all muscles associated with pushing. While Barbell rows stress a lot of back and biceps which are used by the body to pull a weight (forearms are used for gripping and holding). The best examples of mass/compound movements include squats, bench press and dead lifts.

### **The Benefits of Mass Exercises are Many and Include**

1. Adding slabs of meat to your frame! Nothing packs on size like heavy mass/compound movements!
2. Building coordination in the muscles via nervous system stimulation that can only be produced with mass exercise training.
3. Density and Thickness. Compound exercises not only build size, but a look that can only be achieved by heavy mass movements.

These tend to be more powerful lifts, as a lot of your body's muscles are being used and coordinating together to help you lift the weight. I like to think of it as the muscle being worked is doing about 60%-75% of the work. So in an incline dumbbell press, my pectorals are doing about 60-75(the percentage varies depending on how heavy you are going, and how many sets you've done) percent of the work, and my delts and tris are doing the rest. For example, the barbell curls mostly hits your biceps, but you are using a lot of back and shoulders to help lift the weight, so the barbell curl would be thought of as a mass exercise. Some other examples include the upright row, chin-ups, and barbell pullovers. While these exercises are meant to work one area of the body they are in fact getting a lot of power from other secondary muscle groups.

### **Isolation Exercise**

An *isolation exercise* is just that. It's an exercise that isolates one muscle group from the rest of your body. Sometimes I'll hear people say, "Isolation exercises don't build mass"..... I say you're crazy!

For example, the preacher curl totally isolates your biceps off from the rest of your body, but none can dispute that the preacher curls adds slabs of meat to your arms! Same with the concentration curl. What other exercise can build more height on the top of the bicep! Isolation exercises have a huge role in body building! If you are a beginner, I would recommend only using these more sparingly and focus mostly on mass exercises. However, as you become more muscular (intermediate/advanced levels) the need for isolation exercises become more evident. As you focus on mass exercises, you build size, but not always with good symmetry.

With that, isolation exercises too have many advantages including:

1. Building a stronger mind-muscle link. By building this link you can teach your muscles to better coordinate during mass exercises! For example, as you begin

bodybuilding you may be doing chin-ups and going to failure, but only your arms are sore the next day. This is because your mind-to-muscle link with your back is weak! By incorporating stiff-arm pull downs in your back workouts, you can learn to feel and flex your lats. If you start incorporating isolation exercises similar to that in your back routine, don't be surprised if your pull-up numbers sky rocket!

The back is much stronger than the arms, and once you learn how to get full power out of your lats your pull-up will become more efficient for hypertrophy (growth) in your back as you will be exhausting your lats instead of your arms.

**2. Symmetry.** Nothing can shape a muscle like an isolation exercise. Don't be fooled! Bodybuilding is about being massive, but also symmetrical and detailed! Just look at Ronnie Coleman. He's the champ because of his freaky mass and freaky shape and detail! The more detail and shape you have in your muscles the more menacing and ripped you will look on stage or the beach!

**3. Increased mitochondria size and blood flow.** The localized pump an isolation exercise produces is a result of a huge blood flow in the muscle. This causes increased hardness and vascularity. Also inside the cells it causes increased mitochondria size which results in more energy for the muscle cells, which translates to more power!

I like to think of an isolation exercise, as the muscle being worked is doing 80%-90% of the work, and the secondary muscles are doing the rest. For example the forearms and delts are still being used a little in preacher curls, but the bis are doing almost all the work. One other point is that many mass exercises can be turned into isolation exercises by simply sitting down on a bench. Sitting on a bench will not allow you to use your back and legs in an exercise, making it much more isolated! Try doing barbell curls standing, and then seated! You'll be using much less weight!

Some other examples include, dumbbell lateral raises, leg extensions and curls, Tricep kickbacks and Barbell wrist curls.

**Mass and Isolation- The Variables of the Super Set Formula** (Refer to the exercise section if you are unsure of the proper technique for the given exercises)

Mass and Isolation exercises are the two fundamentals to creating supersets. By constantly varying the way you mix up your supersets you will keep your body guessing and growing!

The following formulas are the best ways to mix up the variables for continuous gains and new found size:

1. Mass exercises supersetted with mass exercises
2. Mass exercises supersetted with isolation exercises
3. Isolation exercises supersetted with mass exercises
4. Isolation exercises supersetted with isolation exercises

Let's break each one of these down to get a better understanding of how to apply them and how to create your own lethal superset combinations!

### **Mass Exercises Supersets with Mass exercises**

This is without a doubt, a sure fire way to pack on new size. The combination is lethal and usually quite painful as well. These will also take quite a bit out of you, so I recommend them only on a bulk, when carbohydrates are plentiful! Not only will this combo create freaky size, but will also release tons of growth hormones and elevate natural testosterone levels! (During REM -rapid eye movement-sleep, your body is in an anabolic state, releasing growth hormone. This is when most of your muscle growth takes place. If your body is tired, it stops growing, so get more sleep!)

Other benefits include increased strength and endurance and increased bone density.

#### **Some Hardcore Examples Include:**

Barbell Row supersets with the Dead lift - This is a favorite of Mr. O from the forums! If you're looking for new back density, this is the superset for you!

Behind the back barbell shrugs with front barbell shrugs - Get ready to watch your traps touch your ears!

Chin-up supersets with Barbell Row - You'll be blocking out the sun after this one! This superset offers width and thickness in one foul swoop!

Side-to-side chin-up supersets with Regular Chin-ups- You'll find after you exhaust each side, you can still get a few regular chins using both arms simultaneously!

Incline Dumbbell Press with Decline Barbell Press- Destroy your chest from both ends! The burn from this one is insane!

Barbell Military Press supersets with Dumbbell Upright rows- Boulder Shoulders just took on a new meaning!

Reverse Barbell Curls with Standing Hammer curls- A classic superset for Popeye forearms!

Standing Barbell extensions supersets with Close-Grip Bench Presses- Wear a cut-off shirt on this day! Other wise you're sleeves will rip from the pump!

Squats supersets with alternating leg Barbell Lunges- Go heavy or go home!

Squats supersets with Leg press- Ultra Brutal! You can also vary it up to help add mass to different parts of the leg. For example Barbell Hack Squat supersets with Close-feet, toes straight Leg Presses for the outer thighs.

#### **Creating Your Own!**

My suggestion is to take a list of compound exercises and try to think of your own deadly combos! Try to focus on your weaker points, and use this style of the superset to super-induce growth in the problem area. If your lat width is lagging behind the rest of your body superset lat widening exercises. For example wide-grip barbell rows supersets with wide-grip pull downs!

### **Mass Exercise Supersets with an Isolation Exercise -**

These are an awesome way to finish off any lagging part! These will help shape a muscle and make sure you taxed that stubborn muscle group to the max! Often times after a mass exercise the muscle you are trying to target may still have some strength left. This could be due to a secondary muscle failing first. Try this type of superset for toasting! Especially try them for a mass exercise like the squat or dead lift, where almost the entire body is used during the exercise.

#### **Examples**

My personal favorite is barbell squat supersets with leg extensions. This is going to take a lot of guts to do, but I guarantee you'll see new growth with this combo! What? Not hardcore enough? Throw in a few drop sets and let's see you keep that smile!

There are so many great supersets when you combine mass with isolation!

Bench press supersets with Dumbbell Flies - A sure fire way to finish off your chest! Again, often times your delts can come to failure before your pecs during a bench press. Especially an incline press. Use the dumbbell fly to make sure you've fried your pecs to a crisp!

Wide-grip Barbell upright rows supersets with Seated lateral raises - These will make your delts super wide!

Standing dumbbell curls supersets with seated inner bicep curls - If your goal is to pile up your peaks, then this is your superset!

Reverse Barbell Curls supersets with reverse barbell wrist curls - This superset will burn up the stubborn forearm extensors!

Stiff-Legged Dead lift supersets with the lying leg curl - Have you been neglecting your hammies? Get back into the swing of things with this one!

As you create supersets with this formula, think of the muscles you want to add not only more size too, but more shape as well. Pick an exercise that not only will help shape the muscle you are targeting, but will also give a good deep burn.

### **Isolation Exercise Supersets with Mass Exercise:**

This is a deviation of the pre-exhaustion principle. With pre-exhaustion the tendency is to do some isolated work for an area then perform a mass exercise that targets that same area (More details of this principle will be given in Part II). For example you may perform three sets of seated side laterals followed up by Military Presses.

The basic idea behind pre-exhaustion is that now that you have taxed your side deltoids with lateral raises, they will come to failure during the compound movement first. This shock principle not only works, but gives great results!

This style of superset will shock your body just like the first time you tried pre-exhaustion. By isolating a muscle then immediately super setting it with a mass movement, you get the benefit of mass in the desired area, and an insanely deep burn that I've never felt with any other type of superset! I personally feel that this type of superset is one of the best ways to achieve thickness. It is this type of freaky thickness that allows shorter guys like Lee Priest (5'4") to stand up to much taller competitors and win( creates the illusion of having a longer collar bone)!

For this example we will target the forearms! (The muscle Lee Priest is famous for!) The reverse barbell curl is an awesome mass building arm exercise. It primarily builds beef around the forearms and outer biceps. First try performing reverse dumbbell wrist curls over a bench and superset them with reverse barbell curls! You'll want to chew your forearms off at the elbow to stop the pain! But the end result is development of the aesthetically pleasing forearm extensor muscles!

### **Other muscle Thickening Examples Include:**

L-laterals supersetted with Wide-Grip military presses- Get ready to walk through doors sideways, because your delts will be too wide after this one!

Incline Fly supersetted with Incline Press - I like to change the angle of the incline bench for variation. I find my inner pecs are stressed between a 30 degree and 45 degree angle on the bench. So by changing the bench angle around on a consistent basis I can hit my upper pecs a little bit different each time and get better overall development. Or to shock my upper pecs, I could do say three sets of incline flies or presses and alternate the bench angle a little for each set.

Leg curls supersetted with leg presses- Place your feet high on the foot pad to target the hamstrings. By adding the leg curls before hand you can emphasize this even more. If you have problems feeling your hamstrings, try this on for size!

Leg extensions supersetted with leg presses- This time place your feet low on the foot pad after doing leg extensions for searing quad pain!

Spider Curls supersetted with standing EZ-bar curls- Spider curls are similar to preacher curls, except dangle your arms from the side that is completely vertical. Keep your triceps and elbows flat against the pad and lower your arms all the way down and back up. After failure stand up with the bar and pump out more reps to total failure! One word comes to mind.....OUCH! These are my favorite types of supersets. Where you can go directly from one exercise to another on one fluid motion. These always produce awesome pumps, and in my opinion the best results. I call these *fluid supersets*!

Seated Overhead Tricep extensions supersetted with close-grip incline bench press- Another fluid superset! Use the incline station for this one. Grab the bar and sit up so you can perform overhead barbell extensions. Right after failure, lie back in the incline bench and perform close-grip bench presses! Brutal!

Wide-grip or close-grip cable push downs supersetted with behind-the back dips. Another brutal tricep superset that will leave you at its mercy!

Standing Calf Raises with toes pointed inwards supersetted with standing calf raises with your toes straight-

This is an excellent method for bringing up a lagging head on your calves. Simply adjust your foot positions to hit different regions of the calves. So I might do 300lb. calf raises with my toes pointed in to hit the outer calf until failure, then reduce the weight and go again, this time with my toes straight to target the whole calf. I like to think as toes straight as the mass movement for most calf exercises, as this way hits the whole calf. As opposed to pointing your toes in different directions for more isolated work. (Toes out tend to hit the inner calf, and toes in the outer calves.) Try this in tri-set mode! Do calf raises with your toes pointed out supersetted with toes pointed in, then toes pointed straight! You'll be begging for death!

### **Isolation Exercises Supersetted with Isolation Exercises**

The last but definitely not least fundamental formula for supersets! With great size, you must have great shape, symmetry, and definition of the muscles. This is what makes you a "total package" or just a big pile of meat! In my opinion, this is the greatest superset scheme to achieve these goals! An isolation exercise offers the benefit of feeling the targeted muscle contract much harder than in a mass exercise. You also have the ability to target a different head within a muscle group during an isolation lift. When you superset two of these types of movements together the outcome is an extreme blood pump and super shaping! These are literally the chisels for shaping your physique!

Perhaps my favorite isolation/isolation superset of all times is Jacob's infamous bicep destroyer! Incline Curls supersetted with Preacher curls. The pump on this one is insane as this powerhouse super stretches the bis and finishes it off with a direct attack on all sides of the biceps! This one is a must!!!! Again, I want to say that just because an exercise is labeled "isolation" does not mean you will not get mass from the exercises. It just means more localized and area specific mass, as opposed to overall mass.

There are Many Other great combinations that will help carve you out!

Seated Side Lateral supersetted with L-Lateral- Here is another fluid superset! Right from one exercise to another! This superset will teach you "Width 101".

One arm dumbbell overhead extensions supersetted with Tricep Kickback- Do one arm then the other. The rest period is the time when you are doing the other arm.

Dumbbell Wrist Curl supersetted with Dumbbell twist- This fluid superset will make you realize the test you must take to get A+ forearms!

Stiff-arm push downs supersetted with Face-pulls- You have to be strict with these movements! But remember with a big back better come muscle separation and detail, or else your just a partial eclipse of the sun!

Decline Flys supersetted with the Pec Deck- A great way to carve out detail in the chest! This is another large muscle that needs detail! I find that I can feel the lower pecs being pulled harder on the pec deck, by placing my hands lower on the handle bars.

Adductor Machine supersetted with the Abductor Machine- A great way to even out the lower body!

While we're on the subject of machines...I feel machine and cable exercises are generally isolation exercises. While they do build considerable mass, they are awesome for shaping. With that in mind I like to use lots of machines in my isolation/isolation supersets!

### **Tie-Ins!**

One other way that I like to combine isolation exercises is super setting muscle groups that tie into each other. For example hamstrings with calves. Try super setting lying leg curls with standing calf raises. Or Reverse calf raises with Leg extensions! That is a personal favorite of mine, and will add a menacing edge to any front quad pose! Another favorite of mine is rear delts with triceps. So, in this case I might do One-arm bent-over lateral raises supersetted with tricep kickbacks! While were on the topic of arms try supersetting dumbbell curls with dumbbell front raises for better delt/bicep tie-ins.

When you develop your own isolation supersets think of the muscles you have that need more shape. Examine your muscles and find exactly what part of the muscle is lagging. The inner head, the outer head, the peak, etc. And find what exercises emphasize and isolate that particular part and attack it with the iso/iso superset approach! You won't be disappointed!

### **Incorporating Supersets Into Your Workout for Non-Stop Gains!**

By changing the superset formula variables on a regular basis, you will continue to shock your body for new gains and keep it begging for more!

Stagnate supersets is the main culprit for the lessening of their effect. For example, the first time you switched from Barbell bench press to the dumbbell bench press as your primary chest exercise, you probably got almost instant size gains! After some time, however, you probably noticed the effect on growth seemed to lessen. Then as you switched back to the barbell bench as your main chest exercise you shocked your body once again, and the growth cycle continued! This constant cycling keeps your body in a state of shock! This same principle applies to superset as well (and almost everything in bodybuilding).

When you do the same type of superset all the time, and never mix up the formula the effects of the superset seem to "wear off", and the superset becomes a mediocre set. By simply changing the formula and variety of your supersets you will increase not only your potential for growth, but also your intensity!

Studies have proven that intensity has a direct correlation to growth! The more intensity you have during a set, the more growth you'll get. Intensity is what causes

you to go deep into the pain zone and reach for that new, previously unattainable goal. It's what makes you push for that extra rep, lift that heavier weight, and squeeze out that last ditch effort.

By changing your routine around you literally force your brain to get more into the workout and up its intensity levels. It simply can't adapt and learn the easy way out of a routine, because it's too new for your body. As a result it is forced to work harder! Also by switching things around on a regular basis it just makes lifting more interesting and fun!

### **Variety is the Spice of Life and Bodybuilding!**

I highly recommend breaking down the superset formulas into phases. This is the key to keeping the super in super set! The way you break them down is ultimately up to you. I will give you some foundations to work with. I suggest experimenting with them and finding what works best for you.

Perhaps the simplest way is to break the phases down into weeks. For example:

Phase 1- (Week 1) any time you do supersets, super set mass exercises with mass exercises.

Phase 2- (Week 2) Mass supersetted with Isolation

Phase 3- (Week 3) Isolation supersetted with Mass

Phase 4- (Week 4) Isolation supersetted with isolation

Or,

Phase 1- Mass supersetted with mass and isolation supersetted with isolation. This combo will increase both size, shape, and detail! If you want to make dramatic changes to your physique try this phase out.

Phase 2- Mass supersetted with Isolation and Isolation supersetted with mass.

This is also another great way to increase both size and shape. But by changing the formula you will totally shock your body!

Another possible way to break them down is to base them on what your current goals are.

Bulk cycle: Your goal on a bulk is to of course add mass. Mass supersetted with mass and mass supersetted with isolation are the two best formulas to accomplish this goal. This combo will pack size like never before, and these combinations will produce better results due to the high level of nutrients and carbohydrates consumed at this time.

Cut cycle: Isolation supersetted with mass and isolation supersetted with isolation are the best combinations for detailing and shaping a muscle, along with adding

vascularity. This will make your cutting phase an optimal time to add these super sets to your training.

As I mentioned earlier the combinations here are about as endless as the combos for supersets! Test them out and create you own for never ending gains!

## **CHEAT REPS**

### **Cheaters Do Prosper!**

Strict form and full range of motion is everything. It teaches you to feel the muscle and how to focus the stress on the area being targeted. It's also the number one way to prevent injury. By going to failure through the full, correct range of motion you ensure yourself that you have totally taxed the muscle group in your sights.

I recommend keeping good, solid strict form throughout your first year of training. Learn how to perfect exercises through a full range of motion. Even as you progress through different levels of bodybuilding, proper form is essential and should be adhered to throughout the majority of your training.

However, once you have built a descent amount of mass, and have established a solid muscle mind link with your various muscle groups, you can begin employing the cheating technique. The cheating principle is applied by using momentum to help cheat the weight after failure through the positive (up) portion of an exercise, to take your sets further into the growth zone. You can use either your own momentum or the momentum of the weight.

Cheating heavily emphasizes the negative portion of a lift. I always go for a super slow descent on cheat reps. Simply cheating a weight up and dropping it will do nothing for growth, but will only open you up for injury. I recommend going for a 5 to 30 second descent. Base the count on how heavy you are going and the reps you are attempting to complete. Be sure to perform at least one or two regular sets before using cheating to be sure your muscles and tendons are warmed up and won't injure yourself.

I also suggest some lower back stretching and maybe even a few sets of high rep back extensions. The lower back is the most used muscle when incorporating cheating. This means it is also the muscle most open for injury. By properly warming it up you will get more out of your cheat reps and avoid injury.

### **Guidelines for Healthy Cheating**

1. Never cheat until after initial failure has occurred.
2. Do not use more than four cheat reps per set, after initial failure has occurred. Any cheating reps after four and the assisting body part is doing too much work and the amount of momentum to use becomes hard to judge.
3. Always keep constant tension on the muscle that is being targeted. When you feel other muscle groups doing all the work, or the targeted muscle is relying totally on

momentum to get through the set, stop cheating. When cheating really focus and concentrate on the muscle and don't let anything distract you.

4. If you have any kind of lower back problems, use a belt. Also stretch your lower back out before cheating.
5. Don't cheat on exercises that require total body balance or rely heavily on other muscle groups to lift the weight. For example cheating on the dead lift or squat will most likely cause injury, and there is no safe way to cheat with these. Some mass exercises can be used with cheating, but I feel isolation exercises are much safer to cheat with. I'd recommend avoiding cheating with most exercises involving the chest, calves, thighs or back (there are a few exceptions with the back and chest. I'll get into these later). Power lifters may cheat on squats, but I don't recommend it for bodybuilders or anyone. It's really hard on the knees.
6. If you've never incorporated cheating before, I'd recommend practicing the technique with light weight to get the "proper form" down for cheating safely and effectively.
7. Again your goal should be to boost momentum as little as possible and still get a few extra reps per set.
8. Emphasize the negative on any cheat rep.

### **Thou shall not...**

1. Bounce the bar off your body in any form to cheat out extra reps. For example gym morons who bounce the bar off their chest during bench presses.
2. Bounce your knees off your chest for leg presses.
3. Swing the bar with excessive force. Remember use as little momentum as possible.
4. Overload yourself with too much weight, and then try to cheat yourself through the entire set.

These seem like common sense, but we all see these things done in the gym all the time. I can assure you none of these will aid in growth and will only cause injury to ligaments and joints, or muscle strains and pulls.

### **Types of cheating**

You can break the cheating concept down into two basic ways, loose cheating and strict cheating. Momentum can also be broken down into two types of ways when applied to the cheating principle. These are called weight momentum and body momentum.

*Loose cheating* will bring other muscles into play. Even though it will reduce the immediate stress on the target muscles, it can intensify that stress overall by

extending the set. During loose cheating other muscle groups are used to help cheat the weight up and momentum is used only minimally.

*Strict Cheating* can better isolate the desired muscle. This method also reduces the risk of injury. Strict cheating uses more momentum to lift the weight and relies less upon other muscle groups.

*Weight Momentum* involves using mostly the weight as the source for momentum.

*Body Momentum* involves using mostly your body as the source for the momentum.

Even with all these different types, it is impossible to totally do any one of them 100% without involving the other methods. But different concepts can be emphasized over others. Each of these types will take time and practice to develop.

### **Applying the Cheating Principle for Use in the Gym:**

The following examples are the exercises that I find get the most benefit from cheating. Try utilizing these over your next couple of workouts.

**Bicep Curls** - You can perform these with either a barbell or a dumbbell. Incorporate of cheating with biceps can be done two different ways. One is to swing the weight a bit at the bottom (weight momentum), and the other is to lean back a bit at the top, just enough to get past the sticking point (body momentum).

If you have to bend back too far, or swing too excessively its time to set the bar or dumbbells down. Pushing it any farther will do nothing for your bis.

**Shoulder Presses, front raises, side laterals, and upright rows** - For these movements, you can use a small bounce to cheat out an extra rep or two, even with seated presses. To use momentum when standing, slightly bend and straighten your knees and back to use momentum on these movements (strict cheating).

**Triceps extensions and pushdowns** - Again, by slightly bending and straightening your knees you can bounce to get out a few extra reps on standing triceps extensions. For tricep pushdowns, you can raise your elbows so that the bar is up to about eye level. Then you can use your lats and delts to force-push the bar down, and fight the negative.

**Bench Press with a barbell or dumbbell** - This is an advanced technique. I don't recommend it for maxing out, or even super heavy sets. Even if you do use this technique with a lighter weight, I don't advise doing more than one or two cheat rep per set with these. This is one of those exercises that definitely needs some lower back stretching before attempting.

The basic concept is to do as many reps as you can with your back flat, then drive your feet into the floor and arch your back. You will be able to squeeze out at least one or two more reps! Don't use this cheat technique as an excuse to put on too much weight and arching for all your reps.

**Barbell Rows and Pull downs** - To cheat when doing barbell rows, pull up on the bar hard and fast. As the weight nears the top of the range of motion, dip your upper body down as you squeeze hard with your lats and traps. I'd recommend practicing these with a lighter weight at first and make sure you are well warmed up before going heavier. Make sure you are not just using momentum to get the weight up, concentrate on using your back muscles. This is an example of loose cheating. This is another one that needs to be preceded with some lower back stretching. To cheat with pull downs lean backward to about a 45 degree angle throughout the pulling motion. Allow your lower back to take on some of the work of bringing the bar down. Then fight the negative hard.

## DOUBLE NEGATIVES

### How to Apply Double Negatives

Double negatives are performed on machines that allow **the weight to be centered at all times** during the lift. Thus, most cable movements and cable machines will work, along with some free weight movements that allow the weight to be centered. The centering of the weight allows the negative to be distributed to one side of the body evenly. This would be almost impossible with a barbell as the weight is on the ends and the bar would tip over if you tried to place the entire negative on one side of the body.

As for cables, I feel the rope attachment (same rope attachment you use for cable crunches) is the most versatile piece of equipment that can be used for double negative movements. The rope allows the negative weight to be distributed evenly on the body.

### How do double negatives work?

Double negatives will super blast your muscles into new dimensions of size! They work because they literally shut down your bodies natural defenses to an overload of weight! They also subject the muscle to twice the amount of overload it could normally handle on the lowering portion of a lift.

For example, let's say that you can do a 1 rep maximum of shoulder pressing with a 100 lb barbell. That 1-rep max is your 100% maximum power output. Now if you can stop and hold it statically (still/ not moving) in the fully contracted position, you're stronger! And if you can resist on the way down (negative) instead of just holding the weight still, you're even stronger! If the positive 1RM was 100%, then static is approximately 120% and negative is approximately 140%. Why is this? It's a defense mechanism of the body! If it was the other way around we'd be in some serious trouble! We'd be able to pick up a huge load and hold it above our heads, but once we're there we'd realize that we're too weak to hold it there and.....BAM!

It's a safety buffer to ensure that we can't pick up something we can't handle, and in the worst-case scenario we always have the power to give the weight a controlled descent back down. This is the key to why double negative training works! And this is also why you have to be both disciplined to do it safely. When I am performing double negatives, I always lower the weight with a slow 10 to 30 count. The exact time depends on how warmed-up I am, and how I want to vary the descent time. However, the main thing to remember is a slow and controlled descent. As opposed

to sloppily and loosely dropping the weight too fast. Also stretch heavily, and perform one higher rep working set the regular way before doing any pure double negative sets. The reason why you must be careful is because by doing double negatives you are effectively tricking your body! Simply put, you override the safety by filling the buffer with extra weight, and forcing your muscles to work harder than other wise possible. The downside of this is exactly that - you override the safety limit! The upside is new muscle growth that will blow your mind! With all that in mind let's discuss strategy.

### **Strategies for double negatives**

As I mentioned earlier, my time of descent on a double negative can range from 10-30 seconds. I should mention however, instead of seconds I generally count the numbers out loud, slowly. This helps me focus more, and get my mind off the pain. I believe this time can not only prevent injury, but also is the ideal time to spawn muscle growth! For example, let's take one of my favorite exercises to incorporate when I do double negatives, the rope pull down. To perform this exercise, attach the rope to a lat pull down machine. Begin with one warm up set to get a feel for the movement, and to get the appropriate muscles loose and filled with blood.

Now, comes the hardcore part. Do the rope pull downs with a normal weight that would allow you to get 8, 10, or 12 reps. As you pull down; concentrate all your power, into getting the full range of motion. As you get to the bottom of the range of motion and approach the negative portion of the pull down, begin allowing one side of your back to take the brunt of the negative. Even though you have both hands on the rope, you are allowing one side to take the greater amount of the negative pull, all the way back to the starting portion of the exercise. That is one full rep. Continue in this manner until you have given both sides an equal number of negative reps (This is the reason you should try to select a weight that will allow you to get an even number of reps before beginning the exercise, this may take some experience to estimate).

I like to vary my time for descent according to the amount of weight I use. For example if I was going for 8 reps in the above exercise, I would go for a longer 30 count descent, as opposed to a higher 12 reps, where I may go for a 10 count descent. For all those super insane hardcore lifters reading this....Yes, there are ways to make this principle more intense! The prime example would be to superset double negatives with just emphasized negatives. Let's say I did a full set of double negatives using the rope pull down exercise example. After failure, I could cheat out reps and emphasize the negative using both sides of my back like a regular negative rep. Again going for a slow count, and fighting the pain with all the strength I could muster! Or, I could take it a step further and continue the double negative technique by stripping the weight and repeating the process! I like to call these strip-set double negatives! They are super hardcore and will light the muscle group you are working on fire!

Try the double negative approach with the following exercises! You'll get a new definition of the word PAIN!

1. **Tricep Dip** - This only works at a tricep dip station. The reason is because you can brace your legs on the foot pad and balance your body easier. Try leaning more

on one arm on the negative portion, then push up with both arms, then lean more on the other one, until you have completed a whole set! You'll love these!

2. **Machine Curl** - Awesome for the biceps! You can also take a reverse grip and hit your forearms and outer bis. Beware! These are stretch mark makers! I recommend rubbing vitamin E lotion on your biceps after your gym session!

3. **Standing Calf Machine or Toe Press**- This will be more pain than most can endure, but the pay off will be cow-sized calves! If you want big calves go deep into the pain zone on these!

4. **Leg Extensions/Leg Curls** - You want super cut quads and hams? Try double negative curls and extensions! I have to warn you though; the pain zone will look like a honey moon suite when you get into these babies!

5. **Rope Hammer Curl** - If you want 3D forearm extensors these are a must!

6. **Rope Curl** - Simply grab the rope before it hasn't been tensed by the weight. Now, using some of the slack, twist your wrist so that your palms are facing up. Hold them in this position throughout the whole movement.

7. **Rope Tricep pushdowns** - Same principle here, except keep your arms locked so the rope doesn't move the whole time. In other words don't splay the rope apart when you push or resist the weight. I like to alternate between a wide and close grip for these.

### **STATIC SUPER SETS - Advanced Shocker of the Month!**

This is without a doubt one of my favorite ways for adding peak to any muscle on your body. By peak I simply mean the point in which a muscle is at its most contracted position. This technique will also give the kind of burn that will take you to the threshold of your pain tolerance! When you use this technique you will stimulate your muscles in a way they have never felt before! By improving the peak of a muscle you can create the illusion of more size and make the muscle much more detailed.

This technique involves super setting one exercise with another. The difference is that for the second exercise you don't actually perform any reps, you just hold the second exercise in a static state. However, just like supersets I suggest performing the static rep immediately after the exercise, to keep the blood flowing.

Since these are essentially supersets, you can apply the superset formula principals again. I would suggest breaking them up like this:

- 1). Mass exercises supersetted with a static mass rep
- 2). Mass exercises supersetted with a static isolation rep
- 3). Isolation exercises supersetted with a static mass rep
- 4). Isolation exercises supersetted with a static isolation rep

**Mass Exercises Supersetted with a Static Mass Rep**

Bench press supersetted with static dumbbell press - Go heavy for both of these. I like to have the dumbbells sitting up at the base of the bench and ready to go. As soon as you set the barbell down from bench pressing, hoist up the dumbbells and hold them for a static rep. I like to aim for a 30 second hold.

**Mass Exercises Supersetted with a Static Isolation Rep**

Perhaps one of my favorite static sets of all time is the barbell curl supersetted with the two-handed high cable curl static rep! These will add freaky peaks to your bis!

One of the most painful mass/iso static supersets of all time is barbell squats supersetted with a static rep of leg extensions! You'll hate me if you try this!!!

**Isolation Exercises Supersetted with a Satic Mass Rep**

If you want traps that look like mountain peaks, test out this static super set! Seated dumbbell shrugs with close-grip barbell row static rep. Insane!

**Isolation exercises supersetted with a static isolation rep**

I gave an example of this in my forearms article. If you haven't tried it yet, then you are missing out on an awesome forearm extensor static super set! To perform this painful set, do reverse preacher curls to failure. As soon as failure sets in pick the bar up and set your wrists where your armpits would normally go. Now, perform one reverse barbell or ez-bar curl and hold it there in a static state. Hold for 30 seconds.

**Here's another favorite of mine:**

Calf raises with toes pointed out supersetted with a static rep of calf raises with toes pointed in. Try these in all different variations to get diamond edge calves.

**Conclusion**

I sincerely hope this article gave you a new perspective on some of the all star shock principals.

In this issue we covered supersets, cheat reps, double negatives, and static super sets.

It is my goal over the next several months, to expand upon shock principals in such a way that you will have an insane arsenal at your disposal to wage war against the body builder's mortal enemy, homeostasis!

Good luck with your training!

Old School