

The M&F Complete Guide to Beginning Bodybuilding

Start smart with our all-new 12-week beginner's workout

By Michael Berg, Assistant Managing Editor

So you've finally made the decision, perhaps for the second or third time — no more love handles, no more feeling out of breath after a flight of stairs, no more trepidation at the thought of taking off your shirt or wearing a bikini at the beach. Your mind's made up: It's time to replace some of that fat with muscle, and trim that tire to reveal the washboard midsection you *know* is in there . . . somewhere.

So far, so good. By picking up this magazine and studying this article, you've made a monumental first step. Whether for improved health or a billowing biceps peak (or a little of both), resistance training is the tool you're looking for. You provide the effort and we'll provide the blueprint, right here in the following pages.

Our basic 12-week beginner's program is divided into two six-week phases, gradually stepping up your exercise volume and intensity as you progress and gain confidence. This guide will help you begin your journey; where you take it — whether simply to a toner, fitter you, or to the level of serious bodybuilder — is in your hands.

Charting the Course

Before you start, you'll make better and faster gains if you plan your attack. Assess your goals: What do you want out of bodybuilding? All-around toning and fat loss? A larger, more imposing physique? Perhaps you just want a good set of guns. Whatever you're looking for, pinpoint it before you begin. A goal not written down is soon forgotten, or altered by selective memory as time passes. Sit down right now with a pen and pad, and list your health and fitness goals.

A goal should be attainable, specific and time-constrained to make it happen. For example, "Lose three inches around my waist in six months" is a concrete aspiration. Under that scenario, you'll have to lose a half-inch per month. Thus, to make the overall objective more attainable, you'll want to set that half-inch mark as your monthly aim — this will keep you on track and give you something short-term to strive for.

When we say attainable, we mean it: Don't shoot for the moon right off the bat. Losing 30 pounds in three weeks just

won't happen, and you'll be discouraged after working so hard toward something that you simply can't reach. Yes, you can achieve amazing results over time, but it requires patience, dedication and long-term vision.

The Workout

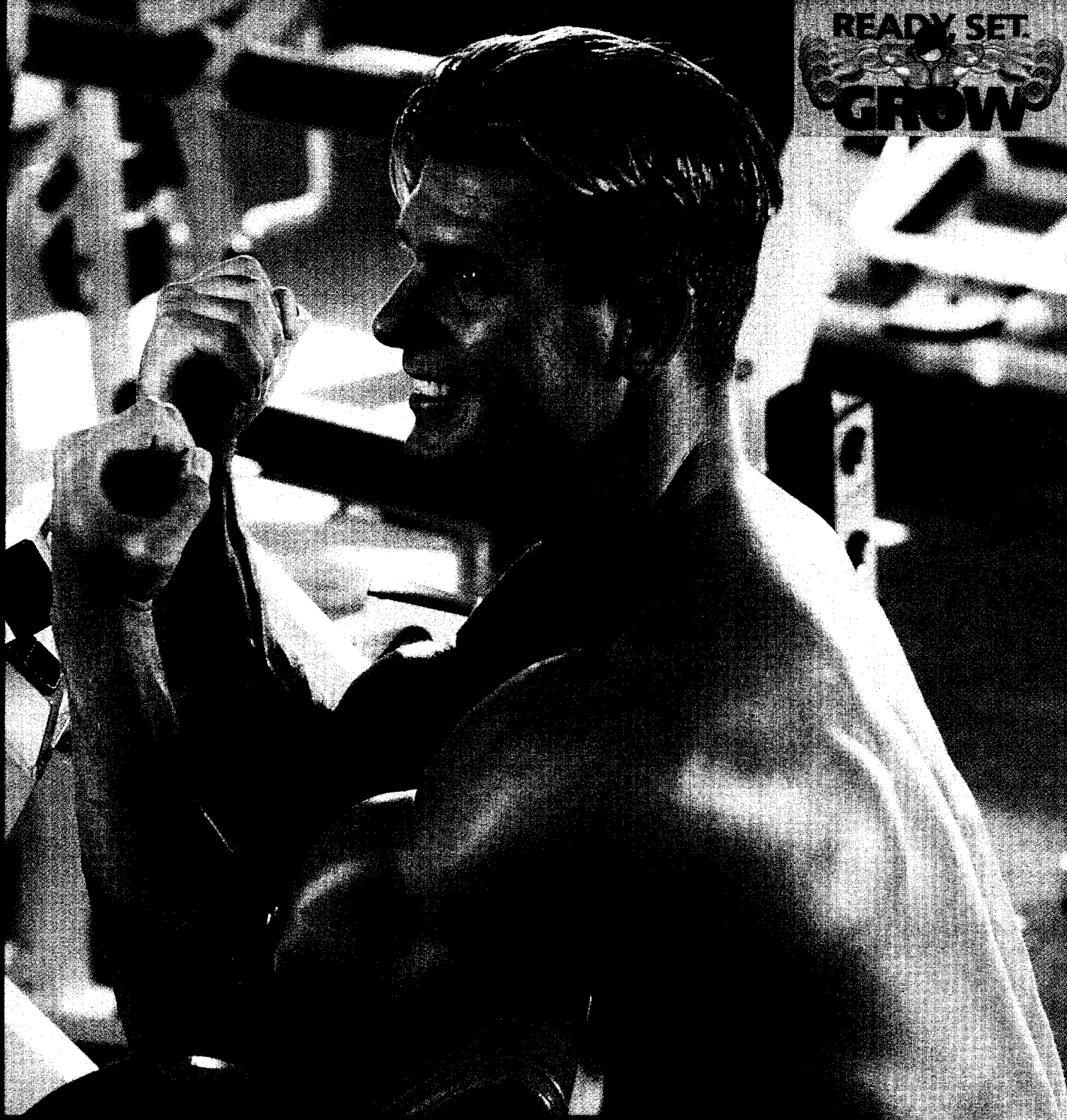
On the laminated card in this special section, you'll find a written plan for your next three months in the gym. It presents your two-part workout in an easy-to-read format, with a handy workout log you can use to track your progress. The first six weeks are designed to acquaint you with the gym, the equipment and your muscles using fairly basic exercises. During the second six weeks, things really get interesting as you learn new barbell and dumbbell movements. Here's the breakdown:

Phase I: Weeks 1-3

For starters, you'll be going to the gym twice a week to lift weights, working your whole body each time with mostly machine movements. Barbells and dumbbells should ultimately be your exercise mainstays, but research has shown that beginners benefit from machine use. Because they're built to move through a predetermined motion, machines

Here are the exercises you'll use during the 12-week program, along with an explanation of what muscles each movement works, and how to correctly perform each one. Read the information carefully and take this article with you to the gym. It's vital that you learn to perform these exercises correctly, so you don't have to unlearn bad habits later! (Note: The shaded areas indicate the targeted muscles emphasized in the exercise; the drawings are not intended to identify all of the muscles involved.)

READY SET
GROW



The M&F Complete Guide to Beginning Bodybuilding

Biceps-Curl Machine

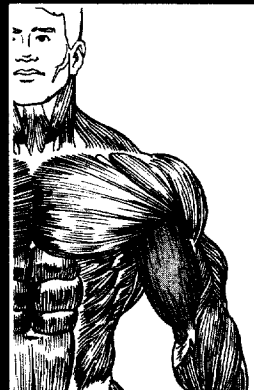
This is a good choice for building biceps mass. On some machines, the armrest pad is angled similar to a preacher bench, while others have a horizontally flat surface. Either one is fine.

- Adjust the seat so that your upper arms and elbows rest comfortably on the pad, armpits tucked into the edge of the bench.

- Grasp the handle with a shoulder-width grip, keeping your elbows in line with your hands and shoulders.

- Curl the bar through a full range of motion, squeezing your biceps at the top, then lowering under control.

Training Tip: Keep your elbows firmly on the pad; don't cheat during a rep by lifting them off.



help beginners form the neural mind-muscle connections and learn correct exercise form. Machines also allow you to focus on the intended muscle without having to worry about balancing the weight, sometimes a tricky proposition for beginners.

For these first weeks, take it slow. You'll likely be tempted to add more sets or push to use more weight, but don't. Give your body time to adjust — more stimulation at this point isn't necessarily better, as a number of studies have shown that beginning weight trainers don't incur further benefits beyond one set per bodypart. Instead of concentrating on moving more weight, select lighter resistance and put your energy into feel and form: Feel the muscles contract and relax, and move through a complete range of motion with proper form. Don't rest longer than 60 seconds between sets.

Weeks 4-6

You'll continue to do two resistance-training sessions per week, but you'll add sets to a number of exercises, meaning you'll spend more time in the gym. (You should still be able to finish within 45-60 minutes at most.) At this point, don't worry about how much weight you're moving, just be sure it's heavy enough to challenge you, but not so heavy that you

can't complete the recommended number of repetitions. If you aren't breaking a sweat, you're taking it too easy!

Phase II: Weeks 7-12

Here we divide the body in half to add more exercises and more thoroughly work individual muscle groups while still keeping each workout to 60 minutes. You'll also perform a third training session each week, so some bodyparts will be worked twice within a week. As in the first phase, spacing your training sessions apart by a day or more is important (for example, work out on Monday, Wednesday and Friday or Saturday) to allow your muscles time to recover. In fact, muscle grows at rest, not while you're in the gym — that's where the stimulus for muscle growth takes place.

You should be feeling stronger and ready to challenge yourself with heavier weights, which is reflected in lower prescribed rep ranges. Now that your body has started to adjust to the added demands of resistance training, you'll be ready to graduate to barbells and dumbbells (free weights).

Form becomes crucial; free weights don't offer the luxury of balancing the weight for you and leading you through the motion. Practice correct form from the very beginning. As countless experts have preached, learning it right the first

Leg Press

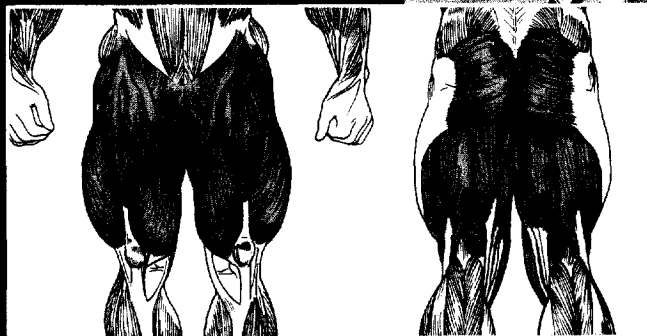
This is a good overall leg-builder, working the quadriceps (front of your thigh), adductors (inner thigh), hamstrings (back of your thigh) and glutes (rear end).

- Load the appropriate weight and sit comfortably on the seat, back firmly against the pad, and place your feet shoulder-width apart fairly high in the center of the platform.

- Pushing through your heels, lift the platform and release the handles.

- Push up to the point where your legs are fully extended (but never lock out your knees), then lower the weight under control for a deep stretch. Your knees should approach your shoulders, but your glutes should never come up off the pad.

Training Tip: Keep your lower back pressed against the backrest. If you set the adjustable platform too low, your glutes may slide forward, especially if your hamstrings are tight, leaving your lower back susceptible to injury.



time is easier than adjusting poor form after months of training, and helps lessen the associated risk of injury.

Sure and Steady

Your enthusiasm to start working out and make changes is probably brimming over. Unfortunately, like teen pop princesses and cheap light bulbs, many who burst out of the gate in dogged pursuit of a beach-worthy physique soon burn out, never to be seen again in their local health club. Don't let this be another year with another broken promise to yourself!

Transforming your body isn't an overnight process. After all, how many nights of eating pizza in front of the TV did it take to get you in the shape you're in now? Take it slow and gradually introduce the tenets of health and fitness into your lifestyle. Don't swear off all chocolate forever, or decide to spend the next week logging more miles on the stationary bike than Lance Armstrong. That's a surefire way to totally derail your efforts. Instead, carefully plan changes in your diet and lifestyle to help harness the power of fitness for a lifetime. Sticking to this workout is one piece of the puzzle.

Today is your first step: Make the resolution to keep your resolution this year, and get in shape the right way!



Lying Leg Curl

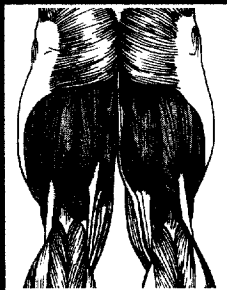
The hamstrings carry the bulk of the load for this exercise, since most people have larger, stronger quadriceps, this is a good way to build a balanced leg foundation.

■ Lie facedown on a leg-curl machine and position your Achilles tendons below the padded lever, your knees just off the edge of the bench.

■ Raise your feet toward your glutes in a strong but deliberate motion, squeezing the muscles at the top, then lower to the starting position.

Training Tip: Keep your hips down on the bench; letting them rise to get more leverage will take emphasis away from the hams

Alternate: Seated leg-curl machine



Beginner's 12-Week Program

Weeks 1-6: Total-Body Circuit Workout

■ Complete the following routine on two nonconsecutive days each week. ■ During the first three weeks, do each exercise for one set of 15 reps; during the last three weeks, do two sets of 12 reps for bodyparts indicated (using a slightly heavier weight on all sets). ■ The last rep of a set should be hard to complete. If not, you may need to use a heavier weight.

Bodypart	Exercise	WEEKS 1-3		WEEKS 4-6	
		Sets	Reps	Sets	Reps
Quads/Glutes	Leg Press	1	15	2	12
Hamstrings	Lying Leg Curl	1	15	2	12
Upper Back	Seated Cable Row	1	15	2	12
Chest	Chest-Press Machine	1	15	2	12
Shoulders	Shoulder-Press Machine	1	15	2	12
Traps	Dumbbell Shrug	1	15	2	12
Triceps	Pressdown	1	15	2	12
Biceps	Biceps-Curl Machine	1	15	2	12
Lower Back	Back Extension	1	15	1	12
Calves	Standing Calf Raise	1	15	1	12
Forearms	Barbell Wrist Curl	1	15	1	12
Abs	Crunch	1	15	1	15

Weeks 7-12: Split Workout With Increased Intensity

■ Divide your body into two parts (upper and lower), increasing your weight-training days to three nonconsecutive days per week (i.e., Monday, Wednesday and Friday). ■ Alternate between the two exercise routines. In the first week, you'll end up doing Workout 1 twice, while in the second week you'll do Workout 2 twice, etc. ■ Do sets and reps as indicated. Rest 60-90 seconds between sets. ■ Choose exercise alternates on occasion to work the muscle a little differently.

Workout 1: Upper Body

Bodypart	Exercise	Sets	Reps
Chest	Flat-Bench Dumbbell Press	2	10-12
	Pec-Deck Flye	1	10-12
Upper Back	One-Arm Dumbbell Row	2	10-12
	Seated Cable Row	1	10-12
Shoulders	Seated Dumbbell Press	2	10-12
	Dumbbell Lateral Raise	1	10-15
Traps	Dumbbell Shrug	2	10-15
Triceps	Lying French Press	2	10-12
Biceps	Standing Barbell Curl	2	10-12
Forearms	Barbell Wrist Curl	2	10-12

Workout 2: Lower Body

Bodypart	Exercise	Sets	Reps
Quads/Glutes	Smith-Machine Squat	2	8-12
Quads	Leg Extension	2	10-12
Hamstrings	Lying Leg Curl	2	10-12
Lower Back	Back Extension	2	20-30
Calves	Standing Calf Raise	2	12-15
Abs	Reverse Crunch	2	15-30
	Crunch	2	15-40

Seated Cable Row

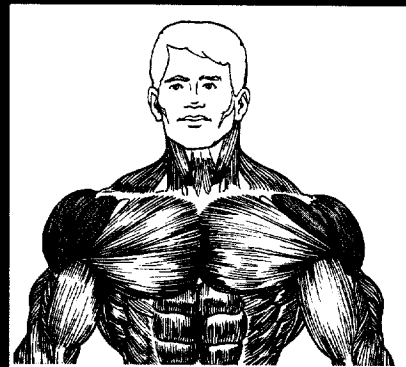
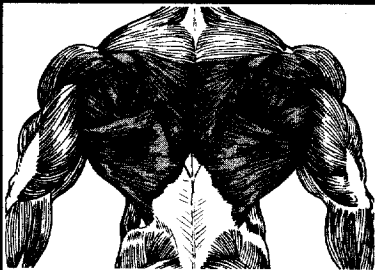
This works your latissimus dorsi (commonly referred to as the lats, or the outer sweep of your back), as well as the muscles in the center of your back around your spine.

■ Grasp a cable handle and sit upright on the bench, bending your knees and placing your feet shoulder-width apart on the footrest.

■ Pull the handle into your upper abdominal area by bending your elbows and bringing them back past the plane of your body.

■ Hold the contraction for a second, then slowly lower the weight until you feel a good stretch in your lats.

Training Tip: Keep your upper torso stable; many people tend to rock back and forth as they perform this exercise, but all that does is add muscle-robbing momentum.



Shoulder-Press Machine

This stresses your deltoids (triceps and upper chest secondarily). Working your shoulders adds width to your upper body and helps form the classic V-taper bodybuilders strive for.

■ Adjust the seat so your elbows line up directly under your wrists and palms when you grasp the handles. The handles should be beside your shoulders in the start position.

■ Push straight up until your arms are fully extended, then lower the weight; don't let the weight rest at the bottom between reps.

Training Tip: Don't squirm in the seat to move a heavy weight; if you can't extend your elbows without shifting your body to generate leverage, decrease the resistance.

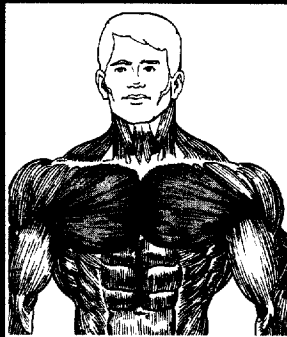
Chest-Press Machine

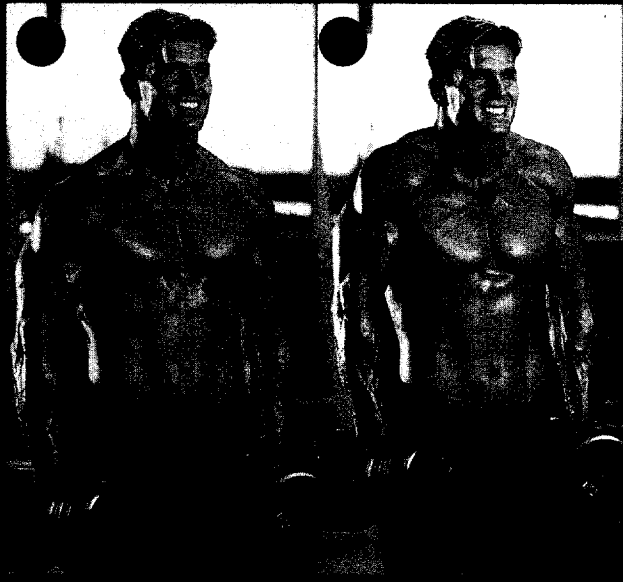
Build your pectoralis muscles with this basic movement, which will prime you for free weight pressing movements later. It also stresses the front delts and triceps.

■ Situate yourself on the bench (whether it's a lying or seated version) so that when you grasp the handles, your elbows are in a direct line with your hands. Keep your chest forward as much as possible.

■ Forcefully push the handles to raise the weight to full extension (just short of elbow lockout), then reverse the motion. Don't let the weight rest at the bottom.

Training Tip: Keep your elbows out away from your body, not pressed to your sides, to increase the action of the pecs and decrease the involvement of the triceps.





Dumbbell Shrug

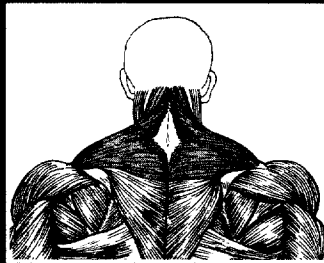
This movement hits the upper portion of the trapezius muscles, commonly referred to as the traps, that sweep off your neck to your shoulders.

- Stand erect with your head up; hold a pair of dumbbells at your sides (and slightly to the front), palms facing your hips

- Moving only your shoulders and keeping your arms as straight as possible, lift your delts toward your ears, then lower and repeat.

Training Tip: Don't roll your shoulders — this provides little muscular benefit and may even cause injury.

Alternate: Smith-machine shrug



Pressdown

While your triceps receive some stimulation from pressing movements for chest and shoulders, this works the back of your arms more directly.

- Stand erect and grasp a bar attached to a high pulley. In the start position, your forearms are just about parallel to the floor.

- With your upper arms locked into your sides, press the bar down to full extension, squeezing your triceps at the bottom. Return the weight to the starting position under control.

Training Tip: Allowing your elbows to stray from your sides recruits the delts, reducing the stress on your triceps.



READY SET GROW

First Things First: Why You Should Warm Up

Before you tax your muscles with loads they aren't accustomed to, you need to get the blood pumping. A warmed-up muscle is more efficient and can even handle heavier loads, while being less susceptible to injury and pain. It also helps get your head in the game, so to speak. That's a pretty big return for a few minutes' investment. Here's how to do it effectively.

1) Cardio for 7-10 minutes. A light jog on a treadmill or a semi-brisk pedal on a stationary bike are great choices.



2) Light stretch. Stretch for a few minutes before every weight training session, and afterward as a cool-down, which allows your heart rate to return to normal. You may also find it useful to stretch your working muscles between sets.

3) Light-weight, high-repetition warm-up sets. You never want to jump right in to your working weight because your muscles probably won't be completely warmed up. Start out with 1-2 sets using very light weights for 15-20 reps, which helps you get a feel for the movement while warming up all targeted muscles and connective tissues.

Learning the Lingo

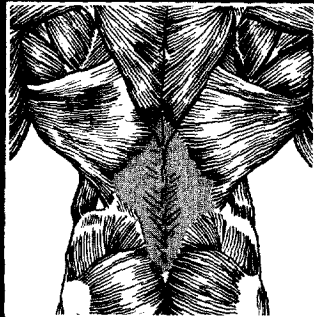
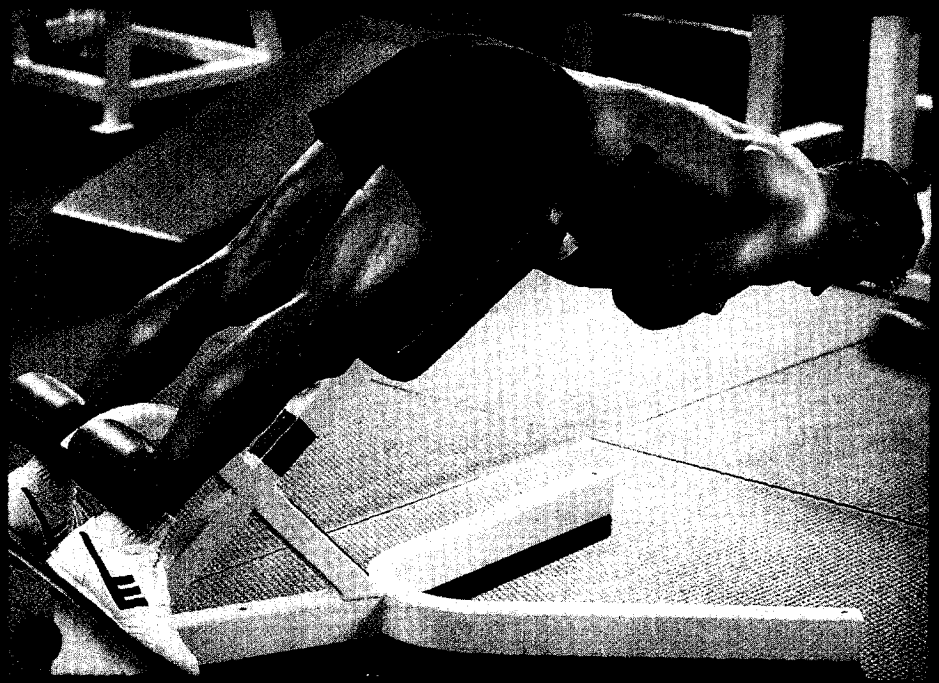
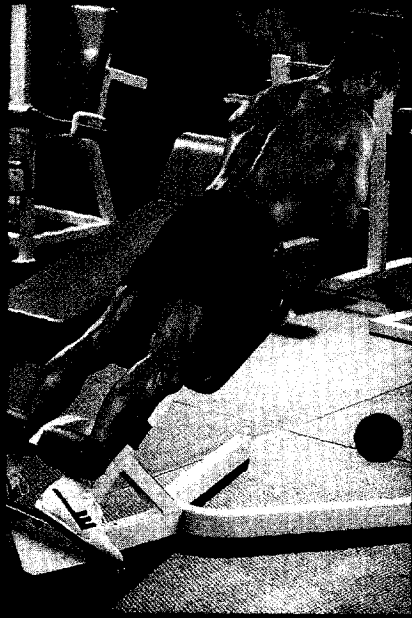
Bodybuilding can be a bit like learning a foreign language, so let's review some of the basic terms of weight training. Understanding these will help you make sense of your workout schedule, even if you've never tried weight training before.

Exercise: A movement using free weights, cables or a machine that works a certain bodypart or group of bodyparts. Common exercises include the bench press, biceps curl and squat.

Repetition: Also called a rep. This is one complete movement through an exercise's full range of motion. On the bench press, for instance, pushing the bar up from your chest (the positive portion of the rep) and lowering it back down (the negative portion of the rep) is one repetition.

Set: A group of repetitions. If you performed 12 reps of that bench press before racking the bar, those 12 repetitions together constitute one set. Typically, you do a warm-up set followed by several working sets with a more challenging weight.

Resistance: The weight you select for an exercise. If you use a 20-pound dumbbell for biceps curls, the resistance is 20 pounds. As a general rule, the more weight you use for a given exercise, the fewer reps you can do with good form.



Back Extension

This movement works the lower back (and hamstrings and glutes to some degree as well). Keeping your lower back and abs in balance strength-wise will help ward off back problems later.

- Lie facedown on a back-extension bench with your heels under the pad.
- With your body straight, head neither flexed forward nor extended backward, and your arms crossed over your chest, lower your torso so your body forms an angle that approaches about 90 degrees.
- Use a smooth motion to rise back up to the starting position.

Training Tip: Don't come up any higher than shown here; extending your torso higher can hyperextend the lower-back muscles and connective tissue, possibly causing pain and injury.

Standing Calf Raise

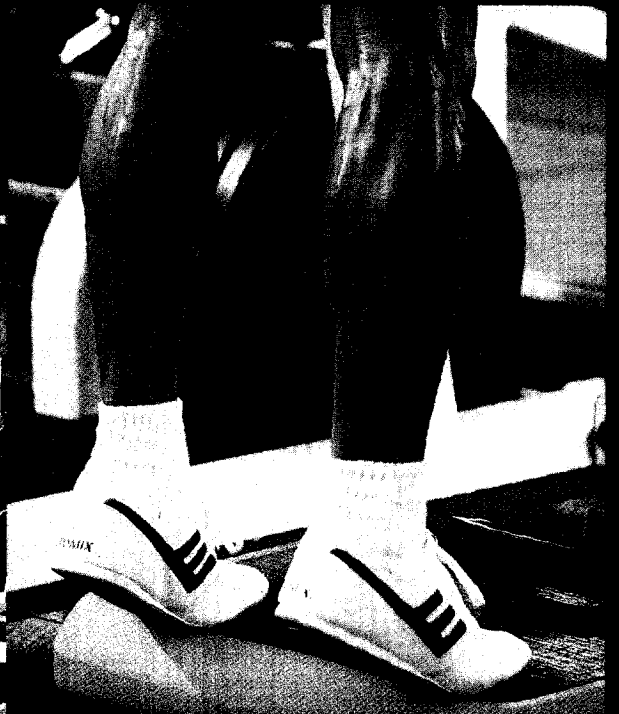
Grow and shape the meaty part of your calves with this simple motion.

■ Stand squarely beneath the shoulder pads of the machine, with the balls of your feet at the edge of the foot rest. (Note: The exercise is shown on the Smith machine here.)

■ With your legs straight, lower yourself to stretch your calves, then rise as high as you can, squeezing the muscles.

Training Tip: Extend your toes as high as possible. A fuller range of motion ensures that you thoroughly work the greatest number of muscle fibers.

Alternate: Seated calf raise.





Barbell Wrist Curl

The forearms typically come into play on most biceps movements, but here you can stimulate them directly.

■ With a palms-up grip, grasp a barbell with both hands — not too tight or your fingers will fatigue before the target muscles in your forearms — and straddle a flat bench.

■ Lean forward to place your forearms firmly on the bench, with your wrists just off the edge, pressing your elbows against your inner thighs.

■ Moving your wrists and hands, curl the barbell up and down.

Training Tip: Use a full range of motion, flexing your wrists to raise the barbell past the level of the bench at the top, and extending it down at the bottom. Don't allow the weight to roll to your fingertips.

Alternate: Dumbbell wrist curl.



Crunch

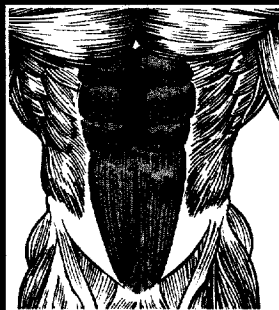
This is the most basic of abdominal movements. Many people perform these incorrectly, doing hundreds of reps. Remember, it's better to do 15 correctly than 1,000 wrong!

■ Lie faceup on the floor with your calves up on a bench so that your hips and knees form 90-degree angles. Cross your arms over your chest or, to increase the difficulty, behind (but not pulling) on your head.

■ Curl your torso up by contracting your abs, simultaneously pressing your lower back into the floor. This is a very small movement: Your shoulder blades should rise only 1-2 inches.

Training Tip: Throughout the set, concentrate on never letting your shoulder blades come in contact with the floor, keeping them up will keep the stress on your muscles and result in a much quicker, more effective burn. Don't go for speed; instead, try to feel your abs contract.

Alternate: Reverse crunch: Start the same as with a crunch, though without the bench. Instead of bringing your upper body up, bring your knees over your chest to lift your glutes off the floor.



READY SET GROW

The Perfect Repetition

Ask any pro or personal trainer and he or she will tell you that learning proper form is the No. 1 priority of every beginner. Sloppy technique to lift impressive-looking weights is a bad habit that's very hard to correct later. Pay close attention to the exercise descriptions here; it also wouldn't hurt to get assistance from a certified personal trainer at your gym or health club to reinforce good technique. You'll also want to pay attention to the following details during each set:

Breathing: Though resistance training is anaerobic in nature, meaning the energy your body uses to lift weights comes from a stored source that doesn't require oxygen to release energy, you obviously can't hold your breath as you complete the movements. The general rule of thumb is to breathe out on the positive portion of the rep (when you lift the weight) and breathe in on the negative portion of the rep (lowering the weight). You should be able to take deep breaths. If you can squeeze in only quick gasps during your reps, you're probably moving too quickly.

Rep speed: A repetition should be done under control through a deliberate cadence. Swing a weight too fast and momentum takes over to bear the load instead of the intended muscles, sometimes putting your joints at risk. To find the correct cadence, count to two as you lift the weight, and count to three as you lower the weight.



Visualization: You may someday build thighs that can move mountains and arms that can tow a battleship, but your most powerful bodypart will always be your mind. Visualizing the targeted muscle relaxing and contracting to move the resistance will help you not only move more weight but do more reps. As you curl a dumbbell, for example, see your biceps contracting to pull the weight toward your shoulder. Taking the time to perform this mental exercise will help you develop a mind-muscle link, giving you a control over your body you never thought possible. Many successful bodybuilders tell us that training is as much mental as it is physical.

Pain recognition: In bodybuilding, there are two distinct types of pain: the pain caused by doing an exercise incorrectly or with too much resistance (bad pain), and the pain associated with a burning sensation within a muscle, as the fibers fatigue and lactic acid builds up (good pain). Learn to recognize the difference! If an exercise is causing pain in your joints, a tearing sensation or just feels awkward even after numerous sets and reps done with correct form, don't continue with it. Everybody is built somewhat differently, so what feels right to your training partner may not feel right for you. Over time, you'll learn to easily differentiate good pain from bad, and you'll be able to design your workout based on trial and error. ➤



Flat-Bench Dumbbell Press

The flat bench is the most basic chest movement. It's a good choice for overall pectoral development. It also hits the front delts and triceps.

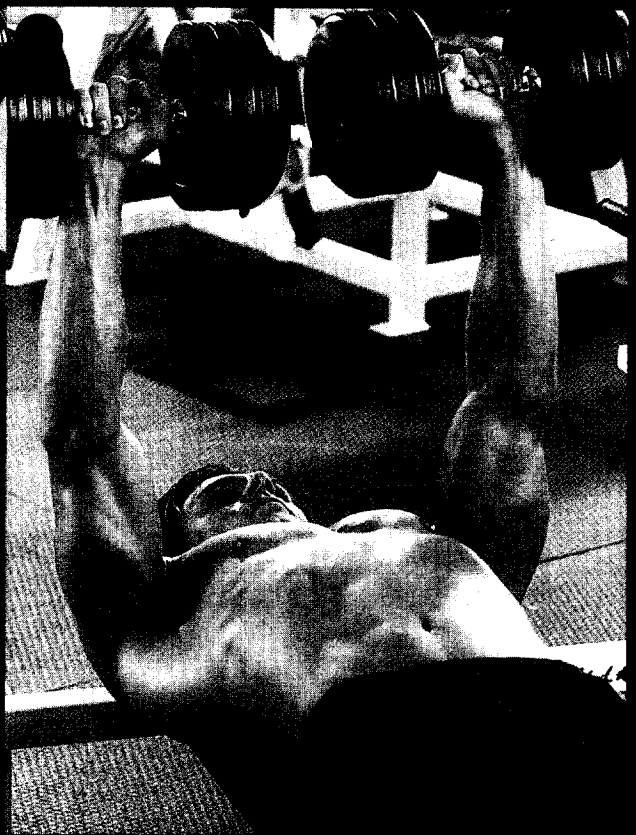
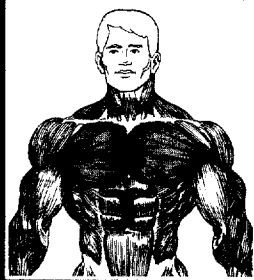
- Grasp a pair of dumbbells and lie back on a flat bench, holding the weights just outside your shoulders, palms facing forward. Plant your feet firmly on the floor.

- Forcefully press the weights up in an arc above you, exhaling as you pass the midpoint.

- Squeeze your pecs at the top (but don't lock out your elbows), then lower the weights under control to the starting position.

Training Tip: Keep your back flat against the bench pad; don't arch it in an effort to lift weights that are too heavy to handle.

Alternate: Incline dumbbell press, barbell bench press.



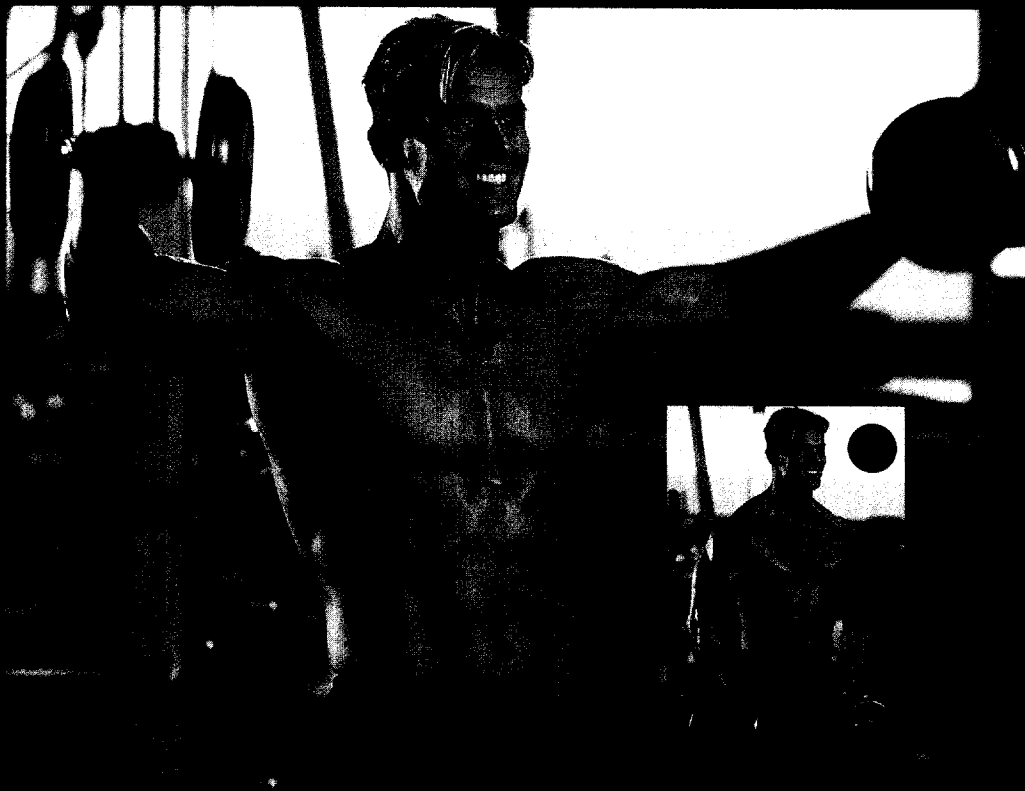
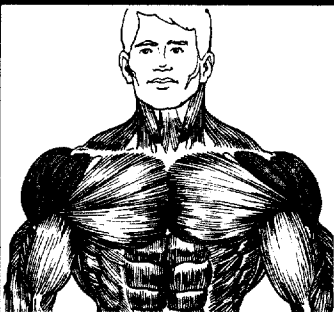
Dumbbell Lateral Raise

This targets the middle and front portion of your delts, which is important to widen your shoulders.

- Stand erect and hold dumbbells at your sides, palms facing each other.

- Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, lift your arms out to your sides until they're about parallel to the floor, leading with your elbows. Slowly reverse to the start position.

Training Tip: A common mistake is to let the angle change in your elbows, which allows for greater involvement of the triceps.



READY, SET,
GROW!

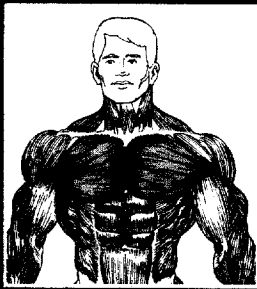
Pec-Deck Flye

Unlike pressing movements for chest, flyes are single-joint exercises that better target just the chest, though you typically have to use far lighter weights.

■ Sit squarely on a pec-deck machine, back pressed against the pad.

■ Place your forearms and hands on the handles, and squeeze your chest to bring the handles together in a steady motion. Squeeze your pecs hard at the top and return under control.

Training Tip: Don't use so much weight that you can't comfortably bring the handles back to the start position. Be careful not to overstretch your pecs in the bottom position. Another type of pec-deck machine has you keep your arms completely parallel to the floor throughout the motion.



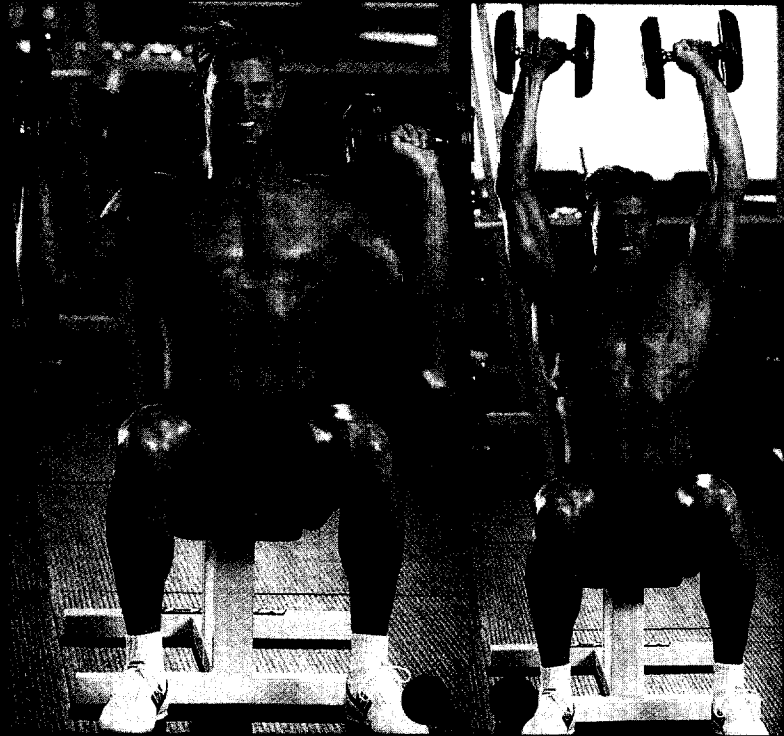
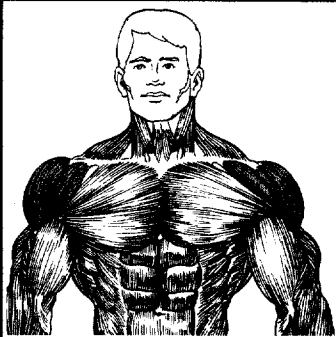
Seated Dumbbell Press

You'll blast your deltoids with this movement, which is very similar to the machine version while learning the balance factor of moving dumbbells overhead. It also works the triceps.

■ Sit on a low-back seated bench with a pair of dumbbells. Hold them outside your shoulders, palms facing forward, head up.

■ Press the weights up in an arc until your arms are fully extended overhead, then lower to shoulder level and repeat.

Training Tip: As the weights come together at the top, don't let them bang together, which briefly removes the muscular tension.



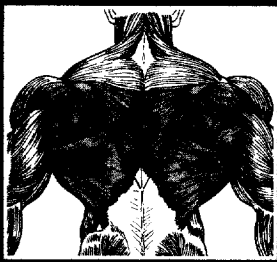
One-Arm Dumbbell Row

Your lats and middle back receive the stimulus here; training one arm at a time allows full concentration on each side, and doesn't let a stronger side compensate for a weaker one.

■ Begin with one hand and knee on an exercise bench, opposite foot on the floor and head up. Hold a dumbbell at arm's length in your free hand, palm facing in.

■ Forcefully pull the dumbbell straight up into your hip, pulling your elbow as far back behind you as you can. Lower back to the starting position. Train both sides.

Training Tip: Don't twist your torso to pull the weight up; the momentum you generate takes away from the muscle action. ▶



The M&F Complete Guide to Beginning Bodybuilding

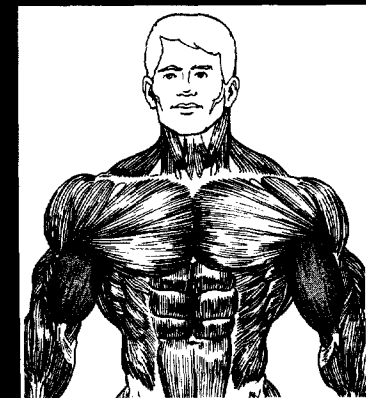


Lying French Press

This excellent triceps exercise is somewhat difficult to master, but effectively works all three heads.

- Lie on a flat bench, with a loaded straight or EZ bar balanced across it, just behind your head.
- Reach back to grasp the bar with palms up, and lift it overhead.
- Keeping your elbows steady and your upper arms angled slightly back, lower the bar toward the top of your head, then reverse to just short of elbow lockout.

Training Tip: Your elbows should act as hinges. They may tend to flare out as you raise the weight, but try to keep them in tight.



Standing Barbell Curl

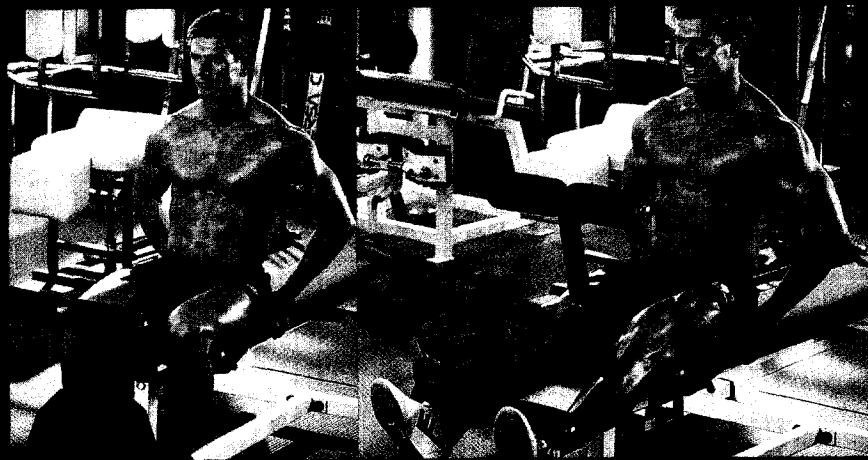
This bread-and-butter biceps movement is almost every serious bodybuilder's No. 1 mass-builder.

- Stand erect with an underhand, shoulder-width grip on a barbell or EZ-bar.

- With your upper arms locked at your sides, curl the bar in a smooth motion toward your chest, then squeeze the muscles and lower the bar back down.

- Don't lower so far as to release the tension on the muscle at the bottom.

Training Tip: Don't rock your body to hoist the weight; your back should remain still while only your forearms move. Keep your elbows back by your sides at the top of the movement.



Leg Extension

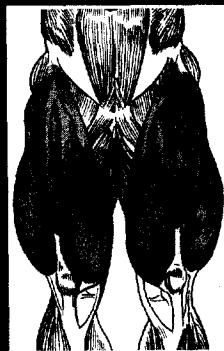
This machine isolates the quadriceps muscles on the front of your upper legs.

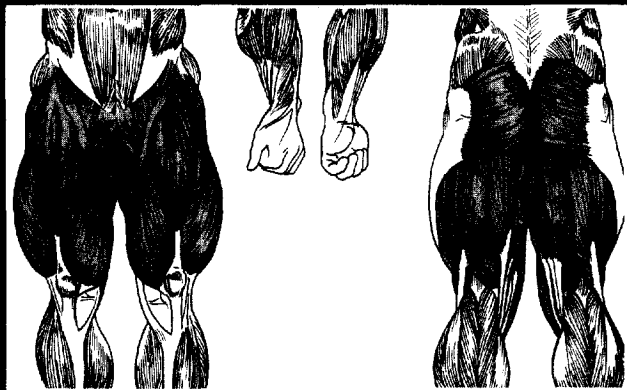
- Adjust the seat back (if so equipped) and footpad so your knees are at the edge of the bench and your ankles are just below the footpad rollers. Sit back against the back pad, if applicable.

- Grasp the handles or the bench edges behind your hips and keep your upper body stable as you straighten your legs in a smooth movement until fully extended.

- Contract your quads at the top and lower under control.

Training Tip: For full benefit, don't let the weight touch down between repetitions. Keep the motion fluid and concentrate on feeling the muscle work.





Smith-Machine Squat

The squat has often been called the best overall mass-building exercise. It stimulates overall leg development but also calls other muscles of the body into play for body stabilization. The Smith-machine version is somewhat easier to learn.

- Stand with the bar across your shoulders and traps, grasping it just outside your shoulders. Twist the bar to unrack it.

- With your chest high, head up and back slightly arched, bend your knees and hips as if you're sitting back in a chair until your thighs are parallel to the floor.

- Reverse the motion by driving through your heels and pressing your hips forward to return to the starting position.

Training Tip: This one takes time to learn correctly, and it's critical that you do it right. Seek guidance from a certified personal trainer on staff at your gym or health club.

READY, SET, GROW

Want Faster Results?

Slow Down and Rest!

Sleep is your body's chance to recover and recuperate. Cardiovascular and muscle adaptations — though stimulated during exercise — actually occur while your body is at rest (with the aid of proper nutrition). Mental processes also rejuvenate during sleep. Deprive your body of rest, and it'll soon function less effectively.

Make a pact with yourself to get 7-8 hours of sleep a night (some people recover more quickly, while some need more rest than normal to maintain health). Help your body fall into a pattern by going to bed and rising at the same times every day. Try not to schedule heavy exercise three hours or sooner before bedtime, as exercise tends to rev internal body processes that research has shown to disrupt sleep.

If you're trying to add mass, rest is even more important; you don't want to be running around all day. If you're playing daily pick-up basketball games or working a physically demanding job, you'll have an even tougher time adding weight. You don't have to be a couch potato, just get some well-deserved R&R.

Don't Forget Cardio

Cardio activity (i.e. aerobics) trains your heart to work better and more efficiently. All successful muscle-building and weight-loss programs include an aerobics component.

Whatever activity you choose, whether a stationary bike or treadmill, running outdoors or even a group aerobic session, do it for 20-30 minutes, three times per week for the first six weeks of this beginning bodybuilding program. In the second six weeks, you can add a fourth session, and/or increase your time to 25-40 minutes per session.

To be effective, cardio training must meet a certain intensity level. To ensure your heart is working hard enough for aerobic benefits, you should determine your target heart rate range and take your pulse during exercise.

To find your target range:

- Subtract your age from 220. This is your estimated maximum heart rate — an approximation of how fast your heart can beat in one minute.

- Multiply this number by 0.6 and 0.85 to find your target heart-rate range (i.e. the optimal target range is between 60%-85% of your maximum heart rate).

Here's an example using a 30-year-old person:

- $220 - 30 = 190$ ■ $190 \times 0.6 = 114$ ■ $190 \times 0.85 = 162$

- Target range is 114-162 beats per minute.

To take your heart rate during exercise, find your pulse using your first two fingers, pressing lightly on the artery close to your thumb on the inside of your wrist, or at the carotid artery at the front of your neck. Count each beat (start with zero as your first number) for six seconds. Multiply that number by 10 to get your heart rate per minute.

When cardio training, always pay attention to signs of overexertion, such as pounding in your chest, dizziness or faintness, or profuse sweating. Cool down for 10 minutes before ending your workout, and if any symptoms persist, see your doctor. **M&F**