

Classified Muscle Building Intensity Techniques



Nick Nilsson's Top Secret "Mad Scientist" Intensity
Techniques

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

Welcome to "Classified Muscle Building...Intensity Techniques"

From:
Nick Nilsson

Ok, you're reading this because you want some KILLER intensity techniques to build a godlike (or goddesslike!) body that turns heads wherever you go. Well, you've come to the right place.

Here's what you need to keep in mind when reading and using these tips...this is not frills...**no pictures, no videos, just INFORMATION.** Read and understand each technique before trying so you know exactly what you're doing. Use at your own risk...uncontrolled explosions of muscle growth and strength may result. **Please read "Terms & Conditions" at the bottom of the report.**



If you have questions about any of the techniques, my secret contact drop box is betteru@fitstep.com



WARNING!

Any exercise program contains an element of risk. Be aware that the exercises and training techniques in the book may not be familiar to you and, even though every attempt has been made to ensure safe instruction, how and if you decide to execute the exercises is ultimately your responsibility. Consult your physician before taking part in any exercise program. By reading the information in this book you hereby agree to the Terms and Conditions of use, found in this book.

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ADD SETS
STUTTER REPS
ARM/LEG SIMULTANEOUS SETS
HI-LOW PRE-EXHAUST ALMOST SUPERSETS
HIGH VOLUME BACK-AND-FORTH SETS

Intensity techniques are not for everybody. Beginners definitely do not need them. They allow the trainer to go beyond conventional failure in order to work the muscle harder, providing a stimulus to get large and stronger. You can try using several techniques in one set if you really

want to work yourself. These should not be done every workout. The following is a list of intensity techniques and how to use them.

1. FORCED REPS

This is the most popular and consequently the most abused intensity technique. A spotter is used to provide enough assistance for the trainer to be able to complete the rep. The abuse comes when the trainer relies on the spotter for assistance during most of the set. The most obvious example is the bench press. Forced reps should not be done every set like some trainers do. Spotters should also provide only just enough help to keep the weight moving; do not take the weight away from the trainer. Properly executed forced reps are very demanding.

2. PARTIALS

This is simply moving the weight through a partial range of motion (usually, but necessarily, the strongest range of motion of the exercise, e.g. the top 6 inches of the bench press). This allows much more weight to be used if it is done as a separate set. Partials can also be done at the end of a set to extend it. Continue with the same weight but do partial reps, shortening the range of motion more as you tire until you are just doing lockouts. Pure partials are often done in the power rack with the pins set at appropriate levels. Partial squats, moving the bar only a few inches with a huge amount of weight on your back, are a great way to build power, density, and confidence. Partials can be done anywhere in an exercise's range of motion. They can help you get through sticking points if you do partials at and through the sticking point. The heavy weight is very useful for building tendon and ligament strength. Sometimes when you hit a plateau, it is not due to muscle strength but connective tissue strength. Partials can help overcome this.

Partials can be done in a continuous without taking tension off the muscles, or in brief reps, allowing the weight to be supported on the racks for a few moments before doing the next rep. The continuous style provides more muscle tension but reduces the amount of weight that can be used. Don't bounce the bar off the pins. Develop tension in the muscles gradually so you don't jerk anything out of the sockets.

If you don't have access to a power rack, you can use any selectorized machine. To do a partial range of motion, just lift the handle up then set the pin. If, at that point, there isn't enough resistance, try adding plates onto the handles (this works best on the Universal bench machine). It would also be possible to have somebody stand on the weight stack.

Partials in the contracted position can be very powerful. Examples include bent-over partials and curl partials in the top position. These are a great movement to finish off a muscle with. Conversely, stretch-position partials can be very powerful too. They will help recruit a large amount of fibers due to the extreme emergency situation created by using a greater than accustomed amount of weight in that position. Taking this concept to set design, try doing partials in the three basic positions of a muscle: mid-range, stretch and contracted (in POF order). This will fire a ton of fibers using extremely heavy weight.

Another related technique is partial negatives. This is the same concept as negatives (see Negative Training chapter for greater detail) only instead of using the entire range of motion, you only use a part of it. This can be the strongest range or the weakest range. For example, if you're doing negatives on bench press, about halfway down, the leverage changes and what you could control for the first half of the movement, you can't for the second half. The solution is to do them as two separate movements with two different weights.

Partial drop sets can also be done to really burn out the target muscle. An example of this is the one for shoulders done on the shoulder press machine in the stretch position.

If you use a lot of partial movements, it is very important to stretch after each set. It is also a good idea to finish with a set that takes the muscle through a full range of motion. A static hold and a negative is a good way to do this as it keeps a lot of tension on the muscle all the way through the entire ROM. Hold in the stretch position for as long as possible at the bottom of the movement.

If you have a plate-loaded pec-deck or pulldown machine where the plate carrier starts low to the ground, here is a trick that resembles setting pins on a power rack. Lift the plate carrier up with no weight on it, slide a bench under it then rest it on the bench. Load the weight from there. Be careful about the cable so it doesn't come off the cam and be sure you have the plate carrier resting over the bench supports and not over the middle of the bench. This is a great way to do contracted position partials.

3. PRE-EXHAUST TRAINING

Do a set of an isolation exercise for a muscle group, then, with no rest, do a compound movement for it, e.g. dumbbell flies then barbell bench press. This fatigues the target muscle then allows the fresher secondary movers to push the target muscle harder.

A variation of this is the pre-exhaust giant set. A good example is triceps, shoulders and chest. This variation will push the triceps to the limit, and work the shoulders hard. Start with a triceps isolation exercise such as pushdowns. Go to shoulder press, which works triceps and shoulders. Then do bench press, which works the triceps, shoulders and chest. Each progressive set will allow another muscle group to continue assisting. For lower body, try it with hamstrings. Start with legs curls which isolate the hams then move to stiff-legged deadlifts, which work the hams and glutes, then move to lunges which work the hams, glutes and quads.

The pre-exhaust concept can be extended to an entire workout. If you wish to push your triceps harder, try doing them first, followed by chest. You may limit your chest workout but your triceps will be pushed a lot harder by doing chest first. This can be applied to biceps and back, shoulders and chest, or calves and thighs.

Pre-exhaust exercises need not be limited to full range, isolation exercises only. Pre-exhausting with a heavy partial stretch movement followed by a lighter full range or contracted movement works very well.

4. DROP SETS

This entails doing a set to failure with a weight then immediately doing another set to failure with a lighter weight. This can be done as double-drop (reduce the weight once), triple-drop (reduce the weight twice), or down-the-rack (use every consecutive set of dumbbells down a rack) sets. As a basic rule-of-thumb, reduce the weight around 10% with each drop. Another useful way to do drop sets is to pull 45 pound plates off if you're doing an exercise where several are being used (e.g. squats). It is also possible to load the bar with smaller plates to reduce the amount of weight dropped. This is one of the most time/energy efficient ways to train, especially if doing an abbreviated or maintenance program.

Down the rack drop set – if you are doing laterals for your shoulders, start with a weight you can get six reps for, then pick up the next lightest set of dumbbells and go again. Repeat this procedure until you get to the lightest dumbbells. This idea works well with selectorized machines. Simply just keep raising the pin to the next lightest weight. Don't feel confined to drop only one notch or dumbbell. You may drop two notches or skip a pair of dumbbells. This can depend on the exercise. You may finish a set with very heavy weight and may be unable to do another rep with the next lightest weight, as it is still very heavy. It is also not necessary to stick to a set number of reps during the drops (e.g. get 6 reps on every drop). You can try doing one rep with each drop or do as many as it takes to fail at each drop. Obviously, the lighter the weight gets, the more reps you will be able to do.

Heavy-light drop set - do a set of heavy reps then immediately drop to a light weight and concentrate on form and squeezing the muscle. Another option is to do heavy partial movements in the power rack then immediately move to a moderate to light full range movement.

Negative drop sets – use a weight you can only do one or two negative reps under control. Do one or two reps, reduce the weight by a little bit (about 10%) then do another rep or two. Continue this for a number of drops. This technique works well with single arm cable exercises such as cable laterals because of the selectorized weight stacks and the assistance you can give yourself with your other arm. This is a very powerful technique and should be used sparingly. To really burn out, finish with a static hold on the last rep of this.

Fiber sweep Triple Drop – this type of triple drop set works three different ways. The first set of the drop, use a very heavy weight (about 85-90% 1RM) and do 2 to 3 reps with it. This will work on relative strength and connective tissue strength. For the second drop, use a weight that allows 8 to 10 reps. This builds muscle mass and circulation. For the third drop, use a very light weight and do 6 to 8 fast, explosive reps (one second up, one second down). This will work the explosive fibers and the neuromuscular system. Another option on the last set is to do a set of very high reps with a very light weight (30 plus).

Constant rep Triple Drop – this means you do each triple drop for the same amount of reps. Different rep ranges will work different aspects of the muscle. Low rep drop will boost strength (reduce the weight only a little with each drop). Drop sets using more reps will require greater reductions in weight.

Antagonistic superset triple drops – do a superset for two antagonistic muscle groups (e.g. biceps and triceps), drop the weight, do another superset, drop the weight, do another.

Variation triple drop sets – do the first set with the strongest variation and go for power. Do the second drop with the next strongest variation and go for feeling the muscle. Do the third drop with the weakest variation and use very strict form. You can also do that backwards and start with the weakest variation first.

Pre-exhaust drop sets – do a set of isolation work for a muscle then do a compound, drop set right after.

Here is a good trick you can use when you are doing drop sets on selectorized machines. Use multiple pins. Set one at your heaviest weight, one at your next drop, one at your next drop, etc. Just pull the bottom one out when you are done that part of the drop. This decreases the turnover time between drops, increasing the intensity of the exercise. An even better way is to get someone else to pull each pin for you so you can keep tension on the muscle the whole time. Just graze the plates at the bottom for the split second it takes to whip out the pin. You may even want to try not grazing but actually holding it slightly above the next plate and letting the plates drop from there (make sure it is only a fraction of an inch – don't break anything to do this). An

alternative is to have the spotter lean down on the weight stack while they pull or reset the pin so you can keep pushing against it (at the bottom of the movement – push just enough to maintain tension in the muscle, not enough to throw them off). This can also be done for adding weight if you are doing add sets instead of drop sets. If you only have two pins, try leapfrogging them (this only works with someone doing it for you). They take the pin that they just pulled out and insert it higher up while you are still doing your set (preferably wait until the peak of the movement when the weight is stopped for a second or two. This allows use of this technique without using all the pins in the gym. Your helper must be quick for this trick to be really effective.

Plate loaded machines are very useful for drop sets as there are no pins used and the weight can be changed anywhere in the movement without losing any tension and without disturbing the set. A partner is required for effective drop setting.

It is also possible to pyramid your drop sets. Do your first set as a normal set. Do the next set with only one drop. Do your third set with two drops, etc.

5. TRIPLE DROP AND REBOUND SETS

This is a variation of the triple drop set. Do the triple drop then quickly go back and do the starting weight for a few reps. Usually you will be able to get one or two. The reason for this is that the last of the drops is using a lighter weight, which is recruiting different fibers. See the triple drop for detailed discussion.

6. ISOLATION / COMPOUND REBOUND SETS

Do a triple drop set of an isolation exercise, e.g. flies, then immediately use the starting weights for a set of a compound exercise for that muscle group, e.g. dumbbell bench press. You can also do barbell benches if you have it set up and ready to go. This is a type of advanced pre-exhaust training.

7. CHEATING

At the end of a set, when you can't do any more reps with good form, use a bit of body swing or momentum to help get the weight past the sticking point, e.g. swinging the weight up a little at the start of a barbell curl. Do not cheat excessively or you may cause injury. Cheat only to work the muscle harder, not to make the exercise easier.

8. REST-PAUSE TRAINING

This is an advanced technique that allows you to get more reps with the same weight. Do a set to failure. Rest for 5 to 10 seconds then do a few more reps with the same weight. Do this once or a few times depending on your energy levels and how far you wish to push. With this technique you can take a weight you can only do for three reps and do a set of six or more reps with it. This technique works very well for high rep training as well when lactic acid burn forces you to stop. Do a set of calf raises until you can't take the pain, rest for a few seconds and shake out your legs to allow the lactic acid to be cleared somewhat, then do more reps until you seize up again. Shake it out and continue. This allows you to push to muscular failure instead of lactic acid failure.

9. SUPERSETTING

This is a good way to train if time is limited. Supersetting involves doing two exercises with no rest in between. There are a number of different types of supersets. The first is to do two different exercises that work the same bodypart, e.g. incline curls then barbell curls

Isolation/compound supersetting – this is simply pre-exhaust supersetting. Do a set of an isolation exercise then a set of a compound exercise, e.g. flyes then bench press.

Antagonistic supersetting - do a set of an exercise for one bodypart then immediately do a set of an exercise for the antagonistic bodypart, e.g. barbell curls then tricep pushdowns. Antagonist supersetting can help each muscle group recover while working the other muscle. It also makes you stronger in both. Back and chest or quads and hamstrings are other examples.

Simultaneous supersetting – do one rep of an exercise then immediately do another rep for the antagonistic bodypart. Keep going in this fashion. A good example is biceps and triceps. Try doing a low pulley curl followed by a kickback. This way you don't even have to let go of the handle. The less time between exercises the better.

Maximum simultaneous antagonistic rebound supersetting – using two heavy, compound exercises for antagonistic parts. Use 90 to 95% of 1 RM on both. Jump back and forth between 1 rep of each with no rest (e.g. 1 rep bench, 1 rep bent-over row, 1 rep bench, 1 rep bent-over row, etc.). You will be able to get more reps on both. Go until you can't do anymore on your own. Use easy to get to exercises, e.g. bent-over rows and bench press. This can also be done with partial exercises as well. You will use massive amounts of weights with this one.

Upper body/lower body supersetting – do an upper body exercise then a lower body exercise, or vice versa, e.g. chest then calves.

Strict/loose supersetting – alternate sets of strict form sets with loose form (not sloppy though). This can be done either way. Starting with heavy weight and loose form, then going to less weight and strict form.

In set superset – do two different exercises within a rep. You must be able to effect a smooth transition between the exercises in order for this to be effective. An example of this is doing a dumbbell bench press on the positive then a dumbbell flye on the negative on every rep. The Zottman curl, where you use a regular grip on the way up and a reverse grip on the way down is another good example of this. Others include regular deadlifts (up) and stiff-legged deadlifts (down), close grip bench press (up) and lying barbell extensions (down),

Do not superset muscles that assist with the other exercise unless you do them second, e.g. do not do pushdowns then bench press - tricep fatigue will limit your bench press work. You can, however, do the bench press first then do pushdowns. An exception to this is if you are doing it to push your triceps further with the assistance of the pecs and shoulders. Then do triceps first. This would be a type of pre-exhaust superset.

Partial/full supersets – do a partial movement for an exercise, e.g. top range bench press, then do a set of full range reps, e.g. full bench presses right after. To work the muscle even harder, try it with a partial movement in each the contracted and stretch position, then move to full range. To do this, you may wish to start with the weakest range then move to the strongest range then do the full range. You can basically mix it up however you choose, e.g. full then stretch then contracted, like a POF partial superset type of thing.

Partial/partial supersets – do a partial stretch position movement of an exercises, e.g. incline dumbbell curls, then do a partial contracted position movement, e.g. concentration curls. You don't necessarily have to use stretch and contracted movements but this will give you the greatest fiber activation. This technique allows you to use much heavier weights than normal.

10. GIANT SETS

Do several exercises for one bodypart in a row without resting in between exercises, e.g. chin-ups, seated rows, straight arm lat pushdowns, then pull downs. You can do the same exercise more than once within the giant set as well. Try doing the exercises in the order of mid-range, stretch then contracted position (as discussed in the Exercise Selection chapter) for a huge pump.

Alternating tri-sets – this is a variation of the giant set. Use two exercises, but do one of them twice. Alternate it the next time, e.g. bench, chins, bench – chins, bench, chins, etc. This is the antagonistic version. They can also be done for the same bodypart, e.g. pushdown, dips, pushdowns.

Variation giant sets – use variations of the same exercise starting with the weakest version and going to the strongest, using the same weight. An example is wide grip pulldowns to reverse close grip pulldowns to regular close grip pulldowns.

Single rep giant setting – do one rep of a series of exercises for one muscle group. If you wish, cycle through it several times. E.g. 1 rep of bench, 1 rep flat flyes, 1 rep cable cross-overs, 1 rep bench, etc. Cycle through the exercises one rep at a time. You can use POF exercise order protocols to increase the effectiveness. You may use near-maximal weights if you wish to go through once or use sub-maximal weights if you wish to go through several times. You can also rep out on the last exercise if you are using sub-maximal weights, e.g. take the last set of cross-overs to failure.

There are several different ways to set up the rep cycling within the above framework.

1. Multiple rep cycling – e.g. do two reps of each exercise rather than one.
2. Pyramid rep cycling –
 first cycle – 1 rep
 second cycle – 2 reps
 third cycle - 3 reps

This type of cycle will necessitate starting with light to moderate weights.

3. Inverted pyramid –
 first cycle – 5 reps
 second cycle – 4 reps
 third cycle – 3 reps

This is a good style to use because as the cycles go through you are lowering the reps, allowing for fatigue.

4. Variable rep cycling - 1 rep bench
 3 reps flyes
 5 reps cross-overs

Pick a cycle and figure out your loads depending on the number of times through and number of reps. Go as quickly as possible between sets. You don't need to limit yourself to only three exercises per cycle, either.

Partial / Full within set Giant setting – this style of cycling uses the same idea as above but focuses on the useful parts of each exercise. Chest is a good example.

6 quarter reps in the stretch position of flat flyes
6 full range reps on the flat bench press
6 quarter reps in the contracted position of cable cross-overs

You don't necessarily need to 6 reps. You can do more or less depending on how it feels. You can do just one cycle through, multiple cycles or go up and down the cycle (flyes, bench, cross-overs, bench, flyes, bench, etc.)

11. JUMP SETS

This is a way of doing a large number of heavy sets for several muscle groups without losing as much strength from set to set. For example, if you plan on doing 5 sets of chin-ups and 5 sets of bench, start with 3 sets of chin-ups, then 3 sets of bench, then go back and do your remaining 2 sets of chin-ups and 2 sets of bench. The extra rest will allow you to be stronger on your last 2 sets than you normally would. Jumping between antagonistic muscle groups also seems to benefit strength. This can also be done going back and forth on every set instead of groups of sets. This is not a superset. It enhances recuperation by giving more rest to the bodyparts in the same workout time. This allows you to do more weight for each exercise. Jump sets are best used on antagonistic bodyparts such as back and chest, biceps and triceps, or hamstrings and quads.

12. BURNS

These are typically done in the stretch or contracted positions. They are small, fast movements at the end of a set to finish off the muscle. These are most often seen in calf raises. Just bounce up and down in the bottom position at the end of a set until your calves burn.

13. TWITCHES

These are similar to burns in that they are small movements in the stretch position. The trick is to activate the stretch reflex with each one. This is the momentary relaxation of tension then the powerful reversal of direction.

14. 1 1/4 REPS

Do a stretch position or contracted position exercise, but instead of doing a full rep each time, do an extra quarter rep in the target position in between every full rep. If you were doing flyes (stretch position), you would go down to the stretch, come up 1/4 of the way then down, then a full rep. If you were doing concentration curls (contracted position), you would go to contraction, come down 1/4 of the way, then back up to full contraction, then down completely.

15. STRIP SETS

These are done with barbells. Do a set then, without racking the bar, get two spotters to pull off a pre-set amount of weight. Continue with that weight. Keep stripping as desired. This will thoroughly burn out a muscle. It is similar to drop sets, but there is absolutely no rest.

16. NEGATIVES

This technique focuses on the negative portion of muscle contraction (the eccentric or lowering phase). Use about 10% heavier than your 1 RM. Use a spotter to give you a lot of help with the positive then lower the weight slowly on your own. Each negative rep should take about six to ten seconds to lower. To really get the feel for a proper negative, you must not just allow the weight to lower, you must actively push (or pull) against it, fighting it all the way down. It is like you are trying to do a positive rep but aren't. Another way to do negatives is to do the positive normally then get your spotter to add to the resistance on the way down by leaning on the bar or pulling down on it. Do focused negative work at the beginning of your bodypart work when you are at your strongest. See the Negative Training section for a more detailed look at negative training.

17. 2 UP - 1 DOWN NEGATIVES

This is a variation of negative training that is best done with machines. Use two arms or legs for the positive phase then lower it using only one arm or leg. This type of negative training is useful if you do not have a partner to work with. See the Negative Training section for a list of exercises that can be used productively with this technique. When using this technique, you can alternate arms/legs or do the complete set of reps with the one arm/leg, then the complete set of reps with the other arm/leg. To really max out, follow the negative sets with a static hold with both limbs.

18. STOP MOTION

To do this, simply stop the motion at different places along the range of motion and do an isometric (non-moving) hold. This can also be done at the end of a set. Hold weight in the lockout position for as long as you can. This is very demanding when done after full reps then partials.

19. JETTISON

This is similar to the drop set and strip set technique but doesn't require changing weights or using spotters. The example will be barbell curls. Load a barbell then put a collar on. Add a few more pounds outside the collar. Pick up the barbell and hold some elastic cables in addition to the bar. Go to failure with all that then let go of the cables. Go to failure again then allow the loose plates to slide off. Go to failure with the rest.

20. 21'S

This technique utilizes partial ranges of motion. Using barbell curls as an example, do 7 reps in the lower half range of motion, then immediately do 7 reps in the top half range of motion, then finish with 7 full reps.

21. CHAINS

Hang heavy chains from either side of a barbell. As you lift the barbell, you will be lifting more links of chain. This makes the weight heavier during the phase of the lift where you can do more weight. This works for bench, deadlifts, squats, curls, shoulder presses, etc. It is essentially a

homemade variable resistance set-up. Another trick you can use with this is to hang weights from the end of the chain so you have to lift those as well when you lock out (the strongest part of the movement). Set the chain so that weight will be raised just before lockout.

22. INTENSITY SUPERSETTING

The idea with this is to superset two exercises that have one muscle in common. This will make that muscle the limiting group and will work it harder. Use two compound movements that both indirectly stimulate the same part of a muscle group. An example would be upright rows and behind-the-neck press for the lateral head of the delts.

23. COMBINATION SETS

With this technique, you will use two different exercises alternated with each rep, e.g. lying tricep extensions and close grip bench, dumbbell flyes and dumbbell press, rows and deadlifts. You should use exercises that are easily switch from to the other within a set. To take the set even further, when you fail on one exercise, continue with the other one until you fail on that one, too. This should be done when you use an isolation and a compound movement. You will be able to push further on the compound movement. For example, when combining rows and deadlifts, your legs will help push your back further. This whole technique is like an extended pre-exhaust superset. Some more examples include pullovers and presses for chest – barbell or dumbbell, stiff-arm pulldowns and regular pulldown for back.

Combination sets can also be done with exercises for two different muscle groups to enhance the tie-ins between them and create a smooth flow of muscle groups. Some examples include dumbbell curls to dumbbell shoulder press, stiff-arm pulldowns to pushdowns for triceps (this will work your long head thoroughly).

24. HYPER SETS

This is an incredibly demanding technique. Do a maximum positive rep then a maximum negative rep. Reduce the weight by 15% then go again. Repeat this three to four times.

25. SCAP JACKS (SIMULTANEOUS CONTRALATERAL ANTAGONISTIC TRAINING)

This technique can instantly increase your neural drive by 10%. To do this, you train the agonist and contralateral antagonist muscles simultaneously, e.g. train left triceps while training right biceps. Use the same tempo. Here is an exercise example: one arm pushdown and dumbbell curl. Rest 1½ to 2 minutes then do it the other way. Another example could be done for back and chest using the cable crossover setup. Kneel between the two stacks facing one and your back to the other one. You will do a one arm cable row with the cable from the front stack and a press/flye with cable from the rear stack. This can also be done sitting in a vertical bench.

Here are some possible cable variations for your biceps and triceps using the cable crossover setup.

Biceps	Triceps
Face away curls	One arm pushdowns
Reverse face away curls	Reverse grip pushdowns
Facing cable curls	Overhead extensions
Reverse grip facing curls	Supinated grip overhead extensions
Bent over curls	Kickbacks

Use a bit lighter weight in the biceps exercises.

Another option is to do both on the same weight stack (as long as it has a high and low pulley on it). Do a facing curl and a facing pushdown at the same time. Set the pin to a much heavier weight than you would use for either one separately. The feeling is like spotting yourself with both arms on two exercises. You can also try doing one, then the other, e.g. curl up (hold the handle there) then do a pushdown (moving the weight up a little more from there). Lower the pulldown then lower the curl. You can do it in the reverse order as well, e.g. pushdown then curl. This type of setup works for cross-body curls and cross-body pushdowns as well. Look in the cable sections of the Biceps and Triceps chapters for more exercise combination ideas.

26. DUMBBELL / CABLE HYBRID TRAINING

This is an unusual but incredibly effective type of training where you use cables and dumbbells at the same time. Loop a cable around a dumbbell handle then hook it onto itself. This type of training gives you two types of resistance in one movement: the continuous tension of the cable (at an angle) and the up and down tension of gravity on the dumbbell. This type of training can be done with any cable exercises: cable flyes, cable curls, cable preacher curls, cable laterals, etc. It works with any cable exercise that you must lift upwards with (if the cable exercise goes down, like cable crossovers, all you are doing is reducing the weight). Specific exercises are discussed in detail with each bodypart.

If the cable slips around on the bar, try putting a piece of cloth or foam under the cable. Another alternative is to use an ankle harness and attach that around the bar. It has padding built in and will not slip as easily.

27. ADDING WEIGHTS TO CABLE BARS

This technique is along the same lines as the dumbbell / cable hybrid training. The idea here is to attach plates onto the bars you are using for cable work. For example, if you are doing cable curls with a straight bar handle, use the standard collars that clamp on. You will need four of these: two to serve as inside collars and two as outside collars (you can get away with two if you want to use your hands as inside collars – the outside two are the most important to keep the weight from sliding off the bar). Load the handle with weights like you would load a regular bar. Do the exercise like usual. This gives you two types of resistance in one movement. This technique will work with any cable movement where you lift up with the bar (cable curls, cable preacher curls, overhead cable extensions, etc.) It can also be used to give your shoulders a workout while you are doing another exercise (e.g. cable rows with the bar). Holding the weighted bar up while doing rows will work your shoulders and traps.

When using this technique as well as with the cable/dumbbell-barbell technique, you can experiment with the type of resistance you want to use for each component, e.g. heavier weight plates, lighter cables or lighter weight plates and heavier cables. Which combination is more

effective will depend on the force curve of the exercise.

28. REP TARGETING

Set a target of a certain amount of reps and get that target of reps no matter how many sets it takes you to get there. For example, if you pick a target of 50 reps on chin-ups, say you get 30 on the first set. Rest a little while 10 to 30 seconds. Do another set. Say you get 10 reps. Rest. Get 5 reps. Rest. Get 3 reps. Rest. Get 2 reps. Done.

A different version of this is do this is time subtraction. The amount of time you rest between sets is the amount of reps you have left to get to your target. For example, your target is 50, you get 30 reps, your rest period is 20 seconds. The next set you get 10 reps. That leaves you with 10 reps to go, you rest 10 seconds and go again. You get 4 reps, you have 6 left, rest 6 seconds.

29. HEAVY SUPPORTS

This is simply holding a weight in the lockout position of an exercise for as long as possible. An example of this would be just standing there with a huge weight on your back. This would be a squat support. These are best done in the big movements like bench, squats, deadlift, dips, shoulder press, etc. because of the amount of weight that can be supported. These will build connective tissue strength as well as increasing muscle density. After holding a thousand pounds on your back, squatting with three plates won't seem quite so daunting.

30. VARIATION CYCLE SETS

This is a strategy to hit the muscle from as many angles as possible in one set. Cycle through doing one rep of every variation you can think of. Examples include dumbbell curls, kickbacks, and one arm cable pushdowns. Just keep doing one rep from a different variation each time.

31. STATIC HOLD WEIGHT PYRAMIDING

This technique only works on plate-loaded machines. Start with a moderate weight that you can do a static contraction with for a long period of time. Hold it in the contracted position. Have a partner add plates to the machine while you continue to hold. Keep adding plates (small ones such as 2½'s, 5's, 7½'s or 10's work best, depending on the exercise and your strength levels) until the weight starts to drop. At that point, pull off one plate. Hold until it starts to drop again. Pull off one plate and hold. You may come to a point where your partner is pulling off weights as fast as he can just to keep up with your lagging strength.

Make sure you have effective communication such as a nod or a grunt when you want the next plate off or on. Continue this process until you end up at your original weight (you can continue to no weight if you want). This is an incredibly intense static hold and will fatigue pretty much every muscle fiber in the target muscle group except for the explosive ones. To hit them as well, when you are the top of the pyramid using the heaviest weight, do as many partial, explosive reps as you can in the contracted position. You may also wish to try this technique with a barbell and two spotters (add, hold and strip).

32. REVERSE ALTERNATING

This training style is done with dumbbell exercises where the weights can be moved independently of each other. Hold one dumbbell in the contracted position (e.g. the top of a shoulder press or the top of a dumbbell curl) while you lower then lift the other one. This is the reverse of regular alternating. This increases the time under tension in the target muscle group.

33. BODY RATCHETING.

This technique allows you to spot yourself by using bodyweight and static holds to your advantage. In order to do this, you hold the joint where you are exercising in a static hold then you change your body position to complete part of the movement, then you move back to the original position, carrying the joint in a static hold. Preacher curls are a good example. Curl the bar up until it stops. Hold it there. Lean your body over the bar, closing the elbow joint somewhat in the process (completing part of the curl). Drop your body back down, ratcheting the weight up from this. This technique can be used in a wide variety of exercises though should not or cannot be used in others, e.g. squats, deadlifts, barbell bench press, etc.

34. STATIC CONTRACTIONS

This involves holding a weight in a position for as long as possible. This can be in the stretch position, the contracted position or anywhere else throughout the range of motion (such as the sticking point of the bench press). When done in the contracted position, you will activate the most motor units as more and more progressively fire to keep the load from moving. You can enhance the motor unit recruitment of a contracted position by going from a stretch movement directly to a hold. The stretch will activate the myotatic reflex and increase fiber recruitment.

You can use body positioning tricks during a static hold to increase the time under tension and the intensity of the set. Here is an example for leg curls: start in the push-up position with toes pointed, then lie flat toes pointed, then hook toes to involve the calves, then raise your butt up to involve the glutes.

Static contractions can also be done during a set. Hold at the $\frac{3}{4}$ contracted position for a 5 to 10 seconds then continue with more full, regular reps. This can be done on each rep or every other rep or just once or twice.

35. SIMULTANEOUS HEAVY/LIGHT TRAINING

This type of training is done with dumbbells, one heavy, one light, at the same time. Here is an example using dumbbell presses. Hold an 80-pound dumbbell in your left hand and a 40-pound dumbbell in your right. Hold both at the top of the movement. Do 4 reps of one arm press with the 40-pound dumbbell, keeping the 80 pounder at the top. On the fifth rep, lower the 80-pound dumbbell as well then press up simultaneously. Repeat this sequence. You can use any ratio you wish, e.g. 3 to 1, 6 to 2, etc. Switch which sides the dumbbells are on in the next set. Start the heavy weight on your weaker side. As you tire, reduce the ratio, e.g. start at 5:1, then go 4:1, 3:1, etc. Try holding the weights at different spots. You may prefer to keep the non-working dumbbell at the bottom position of the exercise.

This type of training will work with just about any type of two-arm dumbbell exercise, e.g. dumbbell curls, overhead presses, etc. There are two major advantages this type of training has. First, it

allows you to do heavy training and light training at the same time. The second is related to neuromuscular drive. Lifting the heavy dumbbell along with the lighter dumbbell will allow you to get more reps with the light dumbbell. This advantage may be reduced somewhat when the dumbbell is held under muscular tension between reps but it works very well with exercises that allow you to temporarily put down the dumbbell, e.g. dumbbell curls.

Trying this experiment will prove it works. Rest the heavy dumbbell on your lap (when doing seated dumbbell curls) to take the tension off while you curl the light one. Curl the light one until you can't anymore. This is the point where the slow twitch muscle fibers are fatigued and lactic acid buildup prevents one more rep. Keep trying and keep the tension on. Now curl the heavy one explosively. The neural drive from the unfatigued arm that is engaging the fast twitch fibers there will carry over to the unused fast twitch fibers in the fatigued arm and shoot the dumbbell up. It sounds crazy and it looks crazy but it works. This is due to effect of training on the contralateral musculature.

This technique can be used in conjunction with heavy/light training or simply as a self-spot without touching the weight. You may wish to keep the heavy dumbbell in reserve until you need. You can do several reps (about 1 to 3) with this technique productively. This type of spotting can also be done with a contralateral antagonist exercise, e.g. if you're curling with your right arm and can't curl anymore, do a one arm pushdown with your left arm. You'll get a 10% increase in neural drive to the curling arm.

36. VARIABLE SPEED TRAINING

This is a similar technique to simultaneous heavy/light training in that dumbbells are used and are doing two different things at the same time. Variable speed training means using two different tempos for different limbs doing the same exercise. The same or different weights can be used. An example is to do two curls with the right arm in the time it takes to do one curl with the left arm. This type of training will develop your coordination and concentration. You can switch speeds during the course of the set or in the following set.

37. SIMULTANEOUS DOUBLE EXERCISE TRAINING

This is a technique in which you do two different exercises or exercise variations at the same time. For biceps, you may do regular dumbbell curls with one arm and reverse curls with the other. You might do dumbbell bench press with one arm and dumbbell flyes with the other. It doesn't even have to be for the same muscle group. You may wish to do pec deck and dumbbell curls. It doesn't necessarily have to be confined to one limb at a time either. You may wish to do an upper body and lower body exercise simultaneously. A good example is leg extensions and dumbbell curls.

This type of training can be very useful for sports that require limbs to be doing different things at the same time, e.g. martial arts. It helps to separate the limbs in the nervous system, increasing your motor skill pool and coordination.

38. DOUBLE DOUBLE IMPACT REPS

This is a logical extension of the double impact $\frac{1}{4}$ rep used in the stretch or contracted position to increase the effectiveness of a stretch or contraction exercise. This type of rep can only be done with exercises that have tension in both the stretch and contracted positions, i.e. cable/dumbbell

training. When you come down to the stretch position, do a ¼ rep stretch twitch, then go down again and come all the way up. At the top, come back down a ¼ rep and redo the contraction. Lower and repeat. This is an extremely intense technique.

39. FULL RANGE OF MOTION PARTIALS

At first glance this would seem to be impossible. The idea is to keep doing small partial movements all the way down the range of motion. Here is a good example using leg curls on a single leg partial protocol. Start at the top of the range, do 3 quick partial reps with one leg then the other. Alternate in this fashion. As you begin to fatigue, the weight will notch down somewhat. Use this as your new base position for partials and go from there. Keep going in this notch-down fashion until you are all the way down at the very bottom. If you really want to destroy your hamstrings, try and get it back up to the top if you can and do a static hold. Instead of using partial movements, this type of “notching” can be used with single leg static holds. This type of rebounding partial or static hold can be used with any 2 up / 1 down exercise on a machine.

40. DOUBLE BLAST TRAINING

With this split variation, you hit the same muscles two days in a row, before they are completely recovered. It is a good way to break past plateaus if you’ve never done this type of thing before. Try it four days a week, e.g. Monday, Tuesday – legs, back, biceps then Thursday, Friday – chest, delts, triceps and abs. Use different exercises and rep schemes on the different days. This can also be done over 6 days, working only two parts per day.

41. A DIFFERENT KIND OF DROP SET

This technique involves actually dropping the weight, not by the numbers but by freefall. It is a stretch-reflex/explosive power technique. Here is an example using bench press that requires a partner. Start with a fairly light weight. Without the bar, set your hands in the bench position a few inches above the bottom. Have your partner or partners hold the bar just out of your reach (an inch or so above). Be ready to catch because your partner is going to drop the bar into your hands. Catch and explode up. This gives a huge stretch reflex. This can be done 1 arm with dumbbells as well, or solo if you are using a single handle cable (have your working hand about an inch from the cable then let go with the other hand, dropping it into your grip).

42 ADD SETS

These are the opposite of drop sets. Start with a light weight for high reps and add weight on progressive sets. This works the slow twitch, higher rep fibers first, then the fast twitch fibers. This technique works very well for calves as they recover very quickly. It also works very well with selectorized machines. You can combine this technique with drop sets, doing add and drop sets or drop and add sets.

43. STUTTER REPS

This type of movement consists of small, quick partial movements over the entire range of motion of a rep. It will look as though you are shaking or stuttering the weight up. On the up phase of a movement, raises the weight a little higher with each up movement while keeping the down

movement about the same. On the negative, let it go down a little lower. This technique greatly increases muscle fiber recruitment as you are doing a series of small stretch-reflex activating movements over the whole range of motion. Only one or two reps of this style need to be (or can be) done as each stutter rep is equivalent to 4 or 5 regular reps. To maximize the stretch reflex, during the positive half or the rep, try to relax the muscle during the quick down phase. Re-engage the muscle forcefully. This also applies to the negative phase. Stutter reps can be used with nearly any exercise. Start with a light weight to get the hang of the style first before progressing.

Another stutter technique that can be used is the stop technique. Rather than doing small bouncing movements, just stop the movement every inch or so. This removes all momentum from the movement. It includes static holds throughout the movement, forcing the muscle to do all the work and start from a dead stop everywhere in the range of motion. This also applies to the negative. As the time under tension is greater for each rep, you only need to do a couple of reps.

DO NOT use stutter reps with lower back exercises or with squats as this can put potentially damaging force on the spine in some of the positions associated with those exercises. A similar technique can be applied to lower back exercises. Alternate slight (but not complete) relaxation and hard contraction very quickly and with no change in body or weight position. This technique requires and enhances muscle control.

44. ARM/LEG SIMULTANEOUS SETS

This is exactly what the title implies. You do an arm exercise at the same time you are doing a leg exercise. This is a great way to maximize your workout efficiency as well as boost your metabolism by using the most muscle mass possible. It boosts the cardiovascular component of the work as your heart must now pump blood to two peripheral areas at once.

Here are a few examples:

- Leg extensions and dumbbell curls
- Leg curls and kickbacks
- Leg curls and concentration curls
- Leg extensions and overhead dumbbell extensions
- Lunges and dumbbell curls

Do these exercises at the same time, e.g. both positive phases, reversed, e.g. leg extension up – biceps curl down, or staggered, e.g. leg extension with both legs, biceps curl with one arm.

45. HI-LOW PRE-EXHAUST ALMOST SUPERSETS

This is very similar to a pre-exhaust superset in appearance, however, it is technically not a superset as you rest between the exercises. Start with a light isolation movement, rest for about 20 to 30 seconds, then follow with a heavy compound movement. This rest period allows for partial recovery of the fast-twitch muscles, allowing for heavier weight to be used than with a conventional pre-exhaust, while keeping the blood flow from the high-rep set in the muscle.

e.g. 60 reps of dumbbell flies, rest 20 seconds, then flat barbell bench press for 8 – 12 reps.

This type of almost supersetting works for all bodyparts.

45. HIGH VOLUME BACK-AND-FORTH SETS

These are done with single limb exercises only. Go back and forth between limbs to failure each limb until you can't do any more with either limb. For example, do one arm dumbbell curls with your left arm for 10 reps then switch to your right arm for 10 reps, then right away go back to your left arm (the reps will probably drop). Continue going back and forth in this fashion. This is a good high-volume, high-intensity technique.

NEGATIVE TRAINING

As explained in the Intensity Techniques section, negative training focuses on the negative portion of muscle contraction (the eccentric or lowering phase). Eccentric loading should be done only after 1 to 2 years of training. The benefits of eccentric training are as follows (some apply more to sports, some to weight training):

1. Improved ability to decelerate limbs and implements and to control landings. This is good for injury prevention. This deceleration is also a factor in weight training. A percentage of the energy used in the bench press (the amount depends on the load used) is used to decelerate the bar at the top to prevent shoulder injury.
2. Negatives are the best for overcoming strength plateaus. They allow you to use supramaximal weights which builds connective tissue as well as muscle strength.
3. There is more mechanical loading per motor unit (up to 1.3 times more tension than with concentric training).
4. Negatives result in faster hypertrophy.
5. There is better strength carryover from eccentric to concentric than vice versa.
6. You can improve or maintain the neuromuscular system's ability to generate fast force production.
7. They are good for rehabilitation. Eccentric weakness can cause overuse injuries in some sports.

Use negatives only six weeks at a time maximum then take a two week break. Some advocate using negatives for only two weeks at a time as they are very stressful on the body's recovery mechanisms due to the amount of fiber damage they cause. Don't do negatives in the same muscle two sessions in a row.

When determining what poundages you should use for eccentric training start with weights that are 5% over you max for that exercise. Depending on the lowering tempo and reps, if this is too easy add another 5%. Keep adding until you get to where you want to be. Each negative rep should take about six to ten seconds to lower. The rep range should be between 1 to 6 but between 4 to 6 is best. If you can do more than six reps, you are probably not using enough resistance to get a good training effect. Another formula you can use is to take your 3 RM and

add 20%. This should be done for 3 to 4 negative reps.

To really get the feel for a proper negative, you must not just allow the weight to lower, you must actively push (or pull) against it, fighting it all the way down. It is like you are trying to do a positive rep but aren't. If you are doing a negative curl, try and curl the weight up as it is being dragged down. Another way to do negatives is to do the positive normally then get your spotter to add to the resistance on the way down by leaning on the bar or pulling down on it. Do focused negative work at the beginning of your bodypart work when you are at your strongest.

Almost any exercise can be done negative-accentuated style. This is easier with a partner but is not impossible if you do not have a partner. Here is a list of exercises you can do negative-accentuated style without a partner. Many of these exercises are described in much greater detail in the Exercise chapter for that bodypart.

Chin-ups – stand on a bench or chair to get into position then lower yourself down. You can also jump up into the top position. This can also be done on the floor on the Smith machine bar.

Adjust the height so that you are standing at the top position.

Dips (weighted) – stand on a bench to get into the top position then lower yourself down.

Handstand push-ups – kick up into the straight arm position then lower yourself down. Drop your legs the kick back up and repeat.

Body leg curls for hamstrings – grab onto something at the bottom (stool, wall, broomstick, bar, etc.) to push yourself back up. Hold a broomstick or bar in your hands on the way down then use it to push on the floor like a polevaulter. Another way is go down straight-body. On the way up, bend your knees as far as you can. This will make it much easier on the way up.

Lying tricep extensions – lower the bar to your forehead then move the bar down your body and push up as a close-grip bench press. The press is a compound movement and will allow you to move more weight than the extensions.

Exercises that lend themselves to 2 arms up / 1 arm down negative training:

Machine presses – seated, Universal bench, shoulder press, close-grip bench.

Cable curls

Pushdowns

Close grip cable rows – let go of the handle with the other hand on the way down.

Bench machine handle rows – standing on a bench at 90 degrees (see Back Exercises)

Calf raises – seated or standing or any other variations.

Leg curls

Leg extensions

Dumbbell tricep extensions

Power rack bench press negatives – solo solution

Set the bottom pins so the bar rests just high enough that you can squeeze out from under it. Set the racking pins a few inches under the lockout position. Get into position. Unrack the weight. Do a negative rep. Slide out from underneath the bar. Now you have two options. The first is to slide towards the bottom of the bench and deadlift the bar back up onto the racking pins. The second is much easier. For this, slip towards the top of the bench. Go to one side of the bar. This can be on the bar inside the plates (this is quicker because you're not moving as far) or on the ends where weights get loaded (this is easier because of the improved leverage). Lift one end up onto the racking pins, then go to the other side and lift the other end up onto the pins. Get into position on the bench and do another negative rep.

A tips on racking: before you lift the first end up, ensure the other end of the bar is up against the rack's support both on the support pin and on the weight collar. This will ensure you get the

bar up and not the inner bar collar on the rack.

If you don't have a power rack but do have a walk-back squat rack with the angled racks on it, you can do negatives with that. Put a bench underneath the angled racks. Set the bar at a rack where you can unrack it easily. Do a negative. To get the bar back on the racks, just do the one side to the other walking it back up the rack trick, instead of deadlifting the bar.

Negatives can be done partner-assisted. Have your partner apply extra resistance to the bar on the negative, e.g. leaning on the bar during bench, pulling on the bar during curls, etc. You can lift the weight back up yourself or have your partner help with that too.

About three sets of dedicated negatives is about the most you should do.

Negative training may actually stimulate an increase in muscle fiber number (hyperplasia). Theoretically this is done by stimulating the release of Fibroblast Growth Factor. Negative training should not be done too frequently, however, to allow resupplying of FGF. Satellite cells are activated by negative training. They latch on to damaged muscle fibers for repair purposes or form new cells (hyperplasia).

One of the most powerful ways to do negative training is with the partial negative. This can mean only doing the negative movement in a limited range of motion, be it the strongest or the weakest. An example of this is the bench press. The top half of the range of motion is the strongest. If you are using enough weight to do a good negative on the first half, when you come to where the sticking point is on the positive, you will come to what can be called the dropping point on the negative. This is where the leverage suddenly changes and you can't control the descent anymore. The weight will drop and you will lose tension in the muscle.

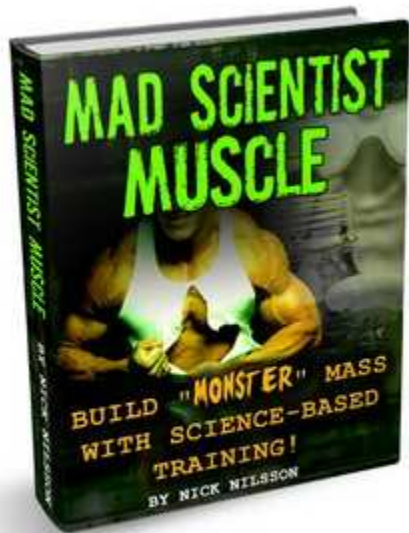
This can be solved by doing two separate negatives: one for the top part with heavier weight and one for the bottom part with lighter weight. This ensures optimal negative tension throughout the entire exercise range of motion. This is best done using a power rack. Another solution is to use rubber bands attached above the bar. They should be set so that they don't exert any appreciable force until around the sticking point. At that point they stretch and begin to take up some of the weight, allowing you to maintain tension in the muscle. The upsidedown rubber band technique can be used for any exercise that has better leverage at the top.

The reason you are able to use more weight for negative training is internal friction in the muscles. This friction takes some of the stress.

Multi-variation negative sets – do one negative rep on a different variation of an exercise each time, e.g. variations of cable curls. This ensures you hit the maximum number of fibers.

If you find, when doing bench negatives, that your triceps or shoulders take most of the stress, try pre-exhausting the pecs with isolation work.

Experiment to find which style of breathing works best for you: exhaling on the down, holding your breath or quick in-and-out breaths.



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