

Foundation Principles

Let's begin by laying a foundation of understanding so you completely understand the principles that support this training philosophy. First of all, the number one enemy of any bodybuilder is over-training. Period. While this is certainly not groundbreaking news or information, yet it is still grossly **ignored** by *99% of bodybuilders!* If you want to get maximum results you can from the time and effort you invest in your training program, you must accept the following principle: *you can train hard and you can long...but you **CANNOT** do both at the same time.* In short, when it comes to gaining size and strength, less is more. Therefore, a program that yields such results will be brief, intense and stimulate strength and lean muscle mass gains by progressively overloading your system to bring about the desired result. This is just such a program.

Furthermore, a solid training program needs to ensure that you *progressively* undergo greater training loads, whether they are in the form of using more weight per exercise and/or in your overall training demands. To understand this system at its core, you should know three things: 1) It utilizes the principle of "Step-Load Progression" 2) It's based entirely on *your own strength levels* at any given point in time 3) It's based on natural strength and growth cycles. Now let's examine each point in detail.

The "Step-Load Progression" Principle

Just as the title implies, "Step-Load Progression" means to bring about overload by gradually increasing demands, in this case with weight loads, over a fixed period of time. As you can imagine, the loading pattern would look much like a staircase if graphed out. Research studies and 'in-the-gym-experience' reveal that the greatest gains in strength and size occur when a trainee uses weight loads between 85-100% of a rep max...*not* max singles. In other words, weight loads are determined by how much a trainee can lift for a given amount of *repetitions*, e.g., 300lb for 8 reps on the squat.

Additional research also shows that the best ranges to work within for strength and size are somewhere between 3-20 repetitions...while 8 or less reps focuses more heavily on Type II fibers (those with the greatest ability to grow).

Based Entirely On Your Own Strength Levels

Most training systems force you to adhere to the results others have achieved while using a similar program. However, each individual has his or her own needs. For example, a doctor would be foolish to prescribe medication in the exact same doses to all his patients with the same ailment. Therefore, shouldn't exercise also adhere to this same principle? That's why this system is based on your individual strength levels at any given point in time...and not fancy charts...or the results that others may have achieved before you. We'll provide the guidelines for the number of sets, weight loads, etc., you provide the strength, work ethic and desire to improve.

Based On Natural Strength And Growth Cycles

If you only learn one thing from this guide, let it be this: The body operates based on cycles. In other words, as the body moves toward a 'peak' in a given unit of time (i.e., as the effort moves closer to 100% intensity), the body must 'down cycle' to recover and restore what was lost. For example, sprinters can only run at peak intensity for about 400 meters, while a marathon runner can run at a moderate pace and lower intensity for quite easily for 26+ miles. But in either case, once they are finished, each runner must rest, before doing it again.

If you add in the principle of overloading a system with stress via intensity, the only way you will experience 'super compensation' is by resting and allowing the body to: 1) put back what was lost 2) allowing the body to rebuild itself to withstand even greater levels of stress from future assaults on it. This system does exactly that. In a minute, we will discuss exactly how this training system manipulates the principles of volume, intensity and overload

During this program you will move through 3 cycles that each last 6 weeks, for a total of 18 weeks. You will be using exercises that are centered on what most would call the "big three": the Bench Press, Deadlift and Squat. Why are these movements so important? Because they all involve the *greatest amount of overall muscle mass per movement*.

In other words, they give you the biggest 'bang for your buck' so to speak. All assistance work will focus entirely on helping you improve on these core exercises.

The System

During this program you will train just 3 days per week — preferably Monday, Wednesday and Friday. You will train Legs/Calves on Monday, Back/Biceps on Wednesday, and Chest/Shoulders/Triceps on Friday. As you can see, each training session begins with a **MAIN** exercise, followed by assistance exercises. Simply follow the progression schemes on page above for each exercise. If you want to do cardio, do it on the days in-between.

The Workout

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
SQUAT	DEADLIFT	BENCH PRESS
Leg Extension	Close-grip Pulldown	Incline DB Press
Leg Curl	Cable Row/T-bar Row	Shoulder Press
Standing Calf Raises	Shrugs	DB Side Raises
Seated Calf Raises	DB Curl or Barbell Curl	Dips
	Ab Cruches	Lying Triceps Extension

Use the following progression scheme for the MAIN EXERCISES - Squat, Deadlift & Bench Press:

SETS:

Week #1 — Establish Rep Max (1 set @100%)
 Week #2 — 4-5 sets @ 85%
 Week #3 — 3-4 sets @ 90%
 Week #4 — 2-3 sets @ 95%
 Week #5 — Re-Max (1 set @100%)
 Week #6 — OFF

REST BETWEEN SETS:

2:00 - 2:30 Min
 2:30 - 3:00 Min
 3:00 - 3:30 Min

For ASSISTANCE EXERCISES, use the following progression scheme:

SETS:

Week #1 — 2 sets to failure
 Week #2 — 2 sets to failure
 Week #3 — 3 sets to failure
 Week #4 — 3 sets to failure
 Week #5 — 4 sets to failure
 Week #6 — OFF

REST BETWEEN SETS:

1 Min
 1 Min
 1 Min
 1 Min
 1 Min

Cycles are broken down as follows:

Rep Ranges For:	Squat, Deadlift & Bench Press
Cycle #1	8
Cycle #2	5
Cycle #3	3

Rep Ranges For:	Assistance Exercises
Cycle #1	7-10
Cycle #2	6-9
Cycle #3	5-8

Notice that during Cycle #1, you will use a 8-Rep Maximum for the Squat, Deadlift and Bench Press. Cycle #2 uses a 5-Rep Maximum. And Cycle #3 uses a 3-Rep Maximum. The reason behind this is to take you through rep schemes and weight loads that push you closer and closer to an actual 1-rep maximum, but **without** actually doing one. I highly recommend you do **NOT** perform 1-Rep Maximums, as they are extremely dangerous...and they will **NOT** lead to muscular growth.

Each week and percentage of load shows a *minimum* number of sets you must perform at that weight and rep scheme (e.g., 4-5 sets @ 85%). This means you should do at least 4 sets. If you feel you can, attempt one additional set. However, 90% of trainees rarely pass 4 sets. The same goes for each successive week. When calculating the weights you will use (based the prescribed percentage of your rep max), always round up (e.g., 315lb x .85 = 267.75 lb—round up to 270lb). *Also, be sure you strictly adhere to the prescribed rest times for each set.*

What's interesting to note is that once you've passed through all 3 cycles and start again with a new 8-rep maximum, you will most likely be able to handle the *same* weight you originally used as your 5-rep maximum. Even better, the same progression pattern should also hold true for both your new 5 and 3-rep maximums! Also, as you become stronger and can handle greater weight loads, you'll be gaining *more and more* muscle mass along with it.

Choose weights for each exercise during each cycle that causes you to fail in the prescribed rep range. As you can see, the 3 cycles take you from 7-10 reps, then to 6-9 reps and finally down to 5-8 reps. This is to help you continue increasing in weigh...even if you have difficulties increasing in weight during a given cycle. For example, let's say you increase from 135 lb to 150 lb on the Leg Extension during Weeks #1-3 of Cycle #1. However, you discover you cannot increase any further during the last two weeks of cycle...no matter how hard you try. Because you will use a rep range of 5-8 during Cycle #2, it *forces* you to increase the weight so will now be within the new rep range.

Also note that you will use your normal weight for the prescribed rep range, and then *decrease* the weight for your next set **one minute** later where you will try to fail within the **same** rep range again. As the weeks progress, you will perform *additional* subsets until the cycle ends, and then go back to week #1 again. To determine the weight you should use for each subset, simply experiment. If you happen to go too light or heavy, simply adjust the weight in future sessions. My experience shows that dropping the weight as shown below seems to work best, but there are no set rules here: For Compound Exercises, usually a 20-pound decrease per set. For Isolation Exercises usually 5-10 pounds. Don't worry, you'll get it right after your first couple of sessions.

Putting It All Together

They key to this training system is giving your body the correct volume, frequency and intensity during each session, and then over each cycle to bring about a positive change in size and strength before you begin to overtrain. These charts explain this in detail:



This training system relies on *increasing* the overall intensity (i.e., the demands on your body via 'Step-Load Progression'). By doing so, your body is forced to adapt to the increasing demands. Other than over training, this is one the single *biggest* reasons why so many bodybuilders fail with traditional training programs. They keep using the same volume and loading patterns, while completely disregarding the level of intensity (increases vs. decreases). For example, trainees are told they should use 4 sets per exercise no matter what the level of intensity may be. However, just 6 short weeks from now, you'll see exactly why you've been cheating yourself by not training this way.

IMPORTANT: During Week #6 we recommend you take one *entire week off* from training. Why? Because after Week #5, your recovery system will have been pushed to its limits. Therefore, you **MUST** give your body ample time to heal, rest and grow.

Wrap-Up

On the next 3 pages, I've included 3 sheets for you to use with your workouts. Print them out, and you'll have the entire cycle right in front of you. You may wish to replace the alternate exercises I've listed with others you prefer. For example, you may want to replace Incline Dumbbell Presses with Incline Dumbbell Flies or even Incline Bench Press. In short, the assistance exercises you use are not important. Just be sure to use the same exercise for an entire cycle...then change them up for the next phase.

If you have back problems and can't squat properly, you may replace them with either Smith Machine Squats or Leg Presses. **NOTE:** If you choose the Leg Press, use the following rep max scheme: Cycle #1 – 10, Cycle #2 – 8, Cycle #3 – 6. If you can't Deadlift, do **NOT** use this exercise, as it *demand*s perfect form. Instead, do Bent Rows or T-Bar Rows, and use the following rep max scheme: Cycle #1 – 10, Cycle #2 – 8, Cycle #3 – 6. **Get growing!**

Body Parts Worked: Back, Biceps, Abs Cycle # **1 2 3**

DAY 2	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Off
Exercise	Week 1 100% Rep Max	Week 2 4-5 Sets @ 85%	Week 3 3-4 Sets @ 90%	Week 4 2-3 Sets @ 95%	Week 5 New Rep Max	Week 6 Off
Deadlift 8 / 5 / 3	Weight	Weight	Weight	Weight	Weight	
		Sets Completed 1 2 3 4 5	Sets Completed 1 2 3 4	Sets Complete 1 2 3		
Assistance Work	2 sets to failure	2 sets to failure	3 sets to failure	3 sets to failure	4 sets to failure	
Close-grip Pulldown 7-10 / 6-9 / 5-8	W R					
Low Cable Row 7-10 / 6-9 / 5-8	W R					
Shrugs 7-10 / 6-9 / 5-8	W R					
Barbell Curl 7-10 / 6-9 / 5-8	W R					
7-10 / 6-9 / 5-8	W R					

DAY 3	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Off
<u>Exercise</u>	Week 1 Rep Max	Week 2 4-5 Sets @ 85%	Week 3 3-4 Sets @ 90%	Week 4 2-3 Sets @ 95%	Week 5 New Rep Max	Week 6 Off
Bench Press 8/5/3	Weight	Weight Sets Complete 1 2 3 4 5	Weight Sets Complete 1 2 3 4	Weight Sets Complete 1 2 3	Weight	
Assistance Work	2 sets to failure	2 sets to failure	3 sets to failure	3 sets to failure	4 sets to failure	
Inc. DB Press Or Fly 7-10 / 6- 9 / 5-8	W R					
Shoulder Press 7-10 / 6- 9 / 5-8	W R					
DB Side Raises 7-10 / 6- 9 / 5-8	W R					
Lying Triceps Extension 7-10 / 6- 9 / 5-8	W R					
Ab Crunches Do 1-2 sets of 8-12 reps for these	W R					