

# The Basic Training Program

**T**HE FIRST TASK facing the beginning bodybuilder is to build up a solid foundation of muscle mass—genuine muscular weight, not bulky fat. Later, you will try to shape this muscle into a balanced, quality physique.

You do this by basic, hard training using heavy weights—grinding it out week after week until your body begins to respond. And what I mean by basic training is not just a few exercises like Bench Presses, Bent-Over Rows, and Squats, but 30 or 40 exercises all designed to stimulate and develop the major muscle groups of the body.

At the end of this period what you want is size, the raw material of a great physique. In my own case, or in the case of other bodybuilders like Dave Draper or Lee Haney, we had pretty much achieved this in our early twenties. I was huge, 240 pounds, but unfinished—like an enormous, gangling puppy who has not yet grown up to match the size of his feet. Although I had won major championships, I was like an uncut diamond. But I had plenty of mass and at that point I set out to create the kind of finished, polished look I needed to become the best I could be.

This initial period may last two, three, or even as long as five years. The length of the process depends on a number of factors such as genetics, body type, and how much energy and motivation you are able to put into your training. Whether a bodybuilder develops faster or slower is no particular guarantee of ultimate quality. What counts is how far you are able to go, not how fast. Dorian Yates, for example, who is incredibly massive, didn't even begin serious bodybuilding until his late teens and early twenties. So no matter when you start, how old you are, or what kind of



body type you have, the process is the same—heavy, consistent, dedicated training over an extended period of time.

## **SPLIT SYSTEM TRAINING**

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Split System Training involves dividing up your training so that you work only some of your muscles in each session, not the whole body all at one time.

*Me at nineteen with four  
year's training*





In the early days when champions like John Grimek and Clancy Ross reigned, bodybuilders usually attempted to train the entire body three times a week. They could train the entire body in one exercise session because they usually performed only 3 or 4 sets per body part. But as bodybuilding evolved it became evident that more precise training was needed to totally shape and develop the body. Different kinds of exercises were required so that the muscles could be worked from a variety of angles, and more sets of each exercise were necessary to stimulate the maximum amount of muscle fiber. But this meant that it was no longer possible to train the entire body in one workout. Too much effort was involved, so the Split System of training was developed.

The simplest type of Split System Training is just to divide the body into two parts: upper-body muscles and lower-body muscles. To hit each of the muscles even harder, you can further divide the muscles so that you take three training sessions to work the entire body—an example of this being training all the “pushing” muscles in one session (chest, shoulders, triceps), the “pulling” muscles the next (back, biceps), and the legs in the third. And various bodybuilders over the years have developed variations of the Split System that they felt best suited their individual needs.

In the exercise programs that follow, I will give you specific recommendations for how to best do Split System Training.

## THE BASIC MUSCLE GROUPS

The human body has more than six hundred separate muscles, but in learning the fundamentals of bodybuilding we need concern ourselves with only a few of these.

Usually bodybuilders divide the body up into the following basic categories or muscle groups:

- back
- shoulders
- chest
- arms
- forearms
- thighs and glutes
- waist
- calves

But to really sculpt and develop each important area of the body, you need to subdivide the muscle groups even further:

- *back*—both the width and length of the latissimus dorsi (the lats), back thickness, middle back muscularity, development of the spinal erectors of the lower back
- *shoulders*—size and fullness, development of each of the three heads of the deltoids (front, rear, and side), the trapezius
- *chest*—upper and lower pectorals, middle chest thickness, fullness



*Dave Draper at nineteen*

of the rib cage, detail muscles at the side of the torso, the serratus and intercostals

- *biceps*—upper and lower biceps, overall length, thickness
- *triceps*—development of all three triceps heads, detail and separation, mass and thickness
- *forearms*—extensor and contractor development, brachialis tie-in to the elbow
- *quadriceps, and glutes*—development of all four quadriceps heads, separation of the quad muscles, sweep of the outer thigh, the adductors of the inner thigh
- *hamstrings*—fullness and sweep of the leg biceps, separation between the hamstrings and the quads
- *abdominals*—upper and lower abs, external obliques at the side of the waist
- *calves*—the upper calf muscle (gastrocnemius) and the underlying calf muscle (soleus)

There are many exercises for each individual muscle. As you go from basic to advanced training, you'll find that the programs I recommend begin to include more and more specific movements for each of the important muscle subdivisions.

## **ORGANIZING YOUR TRAINING**

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For the Basic Training Program, I recommend the following split:

Level I: *each body part 2 times a week*—using a 3-day split (taking 3 days to train the entire body)

Level II: *each body part 3 times a week*—using a 2-day split (taking 2 days to train the entire body)

Abdominals: every workout, both levels

I always liked to train 6 days a week, taking Sunday off as a rest day. This made it easy for me to keep track of my workouts—Monday, a certain group of body parts; Tuesday, a different group, etc. If you're on a different schedule you can do each of your workouts on whatever days they fall—just think of it as Workout #1 instead of Monday, Workout #2 instead of Tuesday, and so on through your entire training program.

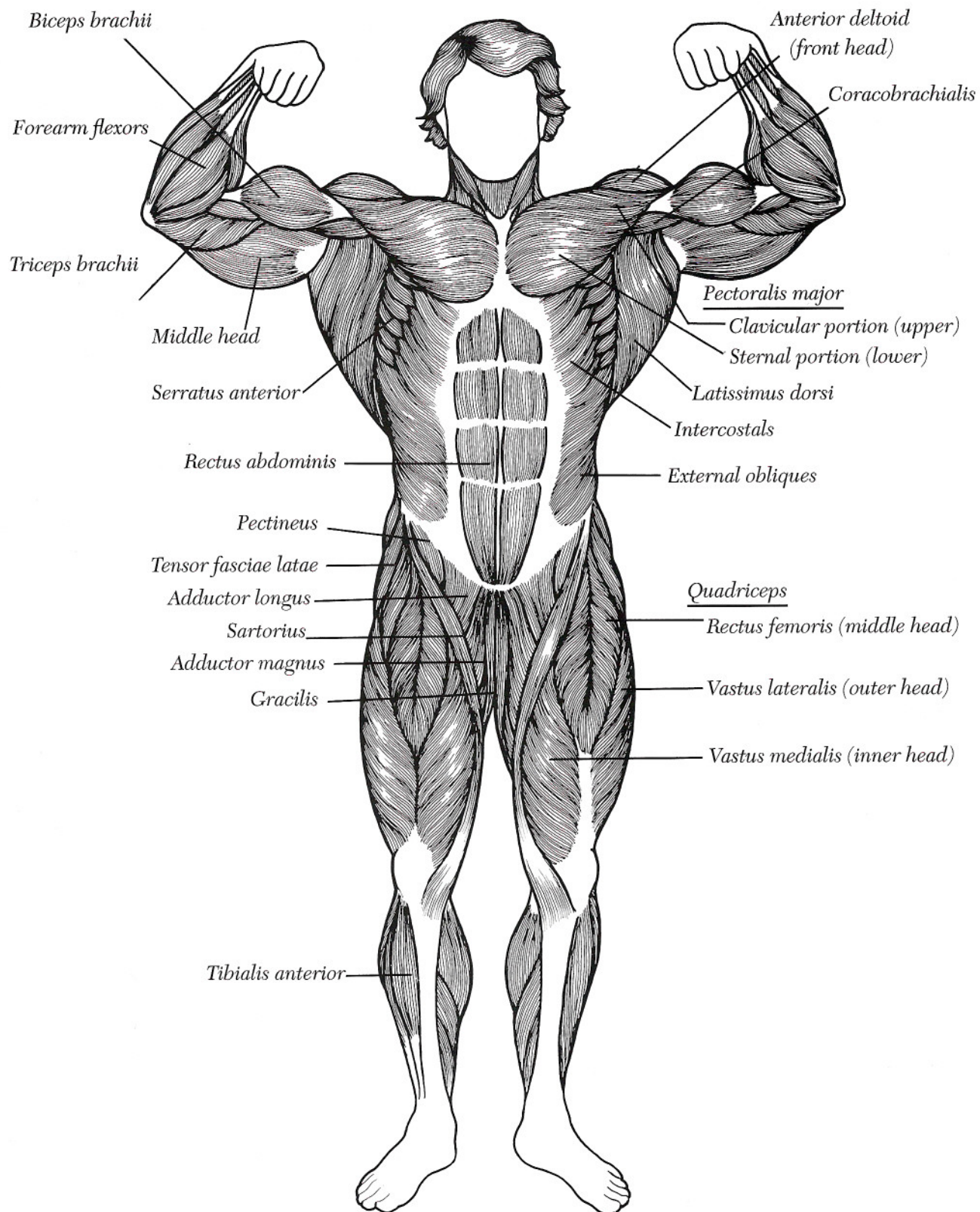
## **REST AND RECUPERATION**

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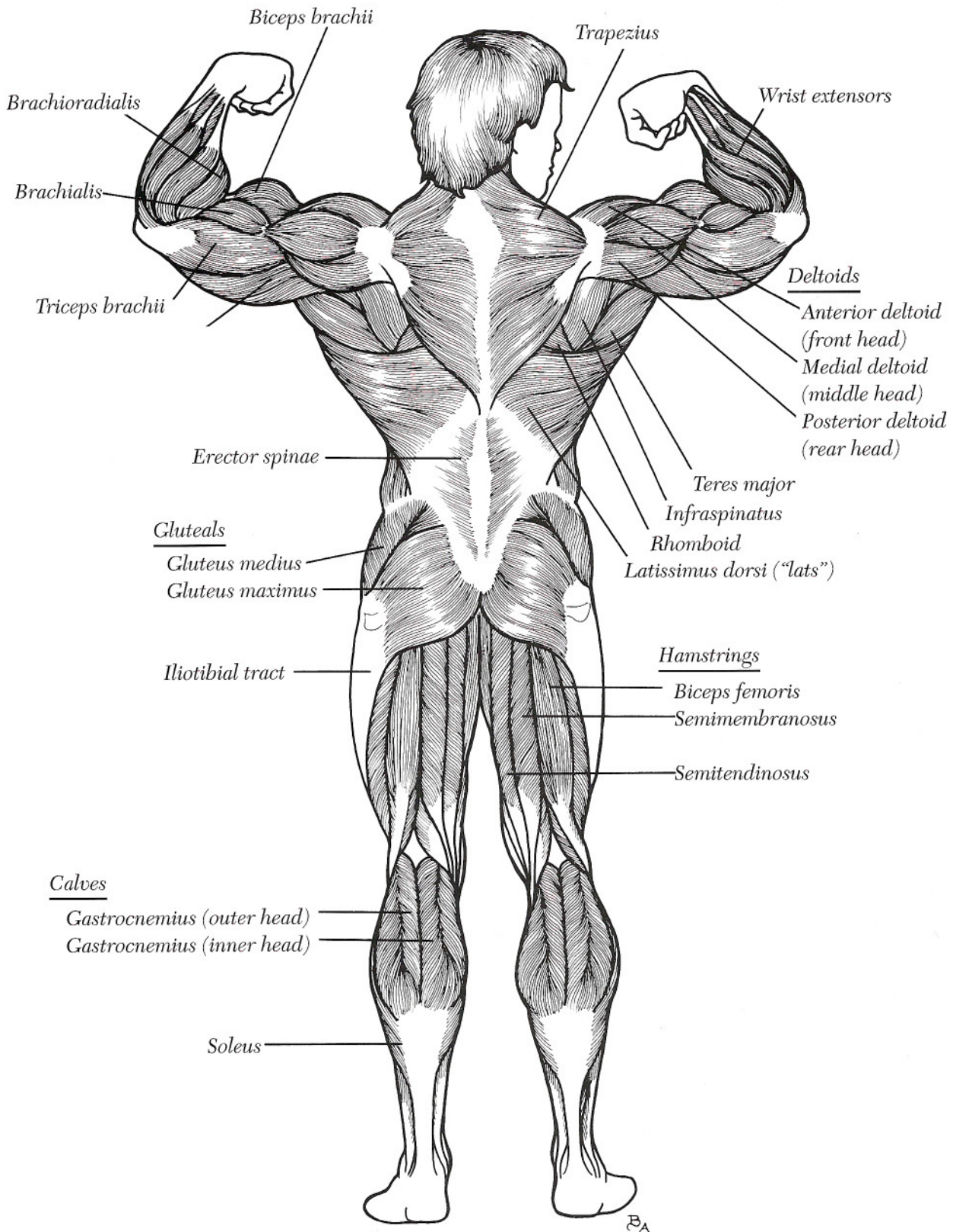
When you plan a workout program, you have to be sure to include rest days. Remember, when you train intensely you have to get enough rest to



## Front View



Back View





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allow the body to recuperate and build both strength and mass. This means getting plenty of sleep (8 hours is best). It also means you need to pay attention to priorities. If building maximum muscle is your goal, you will need to be careful not to exhaust yourself doing too many other sports or physical activities—just as you would have to be careful to save on a regular basis if you wanted to put money aside to buy a house or a car.

You also need to rest on your off days. This doesn't mean you can't engage in any physical activities on that day—you don't have to stay in bed or anything—but if you are running marathons or involved in Hawaiian canoe racing on Sunday you are probably not going to have much energy when you go back to the gym and work out on Monday.

## WHEN TO TRAIN

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My best workouts were always in the morning, when I was rested and fresh. Some bodybuilders prefer to train later in the day, but the majority of the competitors I've been around also liked to train first thing in the day. To this day, Bill Pearl gets his workout in at 5 A.M. and then has the rest of the day to pursue his other interests. If you work regular hours at a job, this means getting up very early to get your training in. When Franco and I got to the gym at 7 A.M. we would frequently see lawyers, accountants, teachers, and others with a full work schedule just finishing their training and hitting the showers before going to their jobs. This showed a lot of dedication on their part, but it's this kind of dedication that yields the best results.

If you absolutely have to train in the evening, or if that's your personal preference, of course you can get results with that schedule as well. Just ask yourself whether you think you are achieving the *maximum* possible from your workouts this way and whether you are training late because it's best for you or because you don't have the motivation to get up as early as necessary for regular morning workouts.

## Level I Exercise Program

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### LEVEL I BASIC TRAINING

WORKOUT #1 MON	WORKOUT #2 TUE	WORKOUT #3 WED	WORKOUT #1 THUR	WORKOUT #2 FRI	WORKOUT #3 SAT
Chest Back	Shoulders Upper arms Forearms	Thighs Calves Lower back	Chest Back	Shoulders Upper arms Forearms	Thighs Calves Lower back

Abdominals every day

### WORKOUT #1

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#### Monday and Thursday

##### CHEST

Bench Press  
Incline Press  
Pullovers

##### BACK

Chin-Ups (do as many as you can at a time until you reach a total of 50 reps)  
Bent-Over Rows

##### *Power Training*

Deadlifts, 3 sets of 10, 6, 4 reps to failure

##### ABDOMINALS

Crunches, 5 sets of 25 reps

### WORKOUT #2

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#### Tuesday and Friday

##### SHOULDERS

Barbell Clean and Press  
Dumbbell Lateral Raises

##### *Power Training*

Heavy Upright Rows, 3 sets of 10, 6, 4 reps to failure  
Push Presses, 3 sets of 6, 4, 2 reps to failure



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**UPPER ARMS**

Standing Barbell Curls  
Seated Dumbbell Curls  
Close-Grip Press  
Standing Triceps Extensions with Barbell

**FOREARMS**

Wrist Curls  
Reverse Wrist Curls

**ABDOMINALS**

Reverse Crunches, 5 sets of 25 reps

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**WORKOUT #3**

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**Wednesday and Saturday****THIGHS**

Squats  
Lunges  
Leg Curls

**CALVES**

Standing Calf Raises, 5 sets of 15 reps each

**LOWER BACK*****Power Training***

Straight-Leg Deadlifts, 3 sets of 10, 6, 4 reps to failure  
Good Mornings, 3 sets of 10, 6, 4 reps to failure

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Note: Although these power movements work the lower back directly, they also involve the trapezius and the leg biceps, and help to develop overall strength.

**ABDOMINALS**

Crunches, 5 sets of 25 reps

## Level II Exercise Program

### LEVEL II BASIC TRAINING

WORKOUT #1 MON	WORKOUT #2 TUE	WORKOUT #1 WED	WORKOUT #2 THUR	WORKOUT #1 FRI	WORKOUT #2 SAT
Chest	Shoulders	Chest	Shoulders	Chest	Shoulders
Back	Lower back	Back	Lower back	Back	Lower back
Thighs	Upper arms	Thighs	Upper arms	Thighs	Upper arms
Calves	Forearms	Calves	Forearms	Calves	Forearms

Abdominals every day

### WORKOUT #1

#### Monday/Wednesday/Friday

##### CHEST

Bench Press  
Incline Press  
Pullovers

##### BACK

Chin-Ups (do as many as you can at a time until you reach a total of 50 reps)  
Bent-Over Rows

##### *Power Training*

Deadlifts, 3 sets of 10, 6, 4 reps to failure

##### THIGHS

Squats  
Lunges  
Leg Curls

##### CALVES

Standing Calf Raises, 5 sets of 15 reps each

##### ABDOMINALS

Crunches, 5 sets of 25 reps



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**WORKOUT #2**

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**Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday****SHOULDERS**

Barbell Clean and Press  
Dumbbell Lateral Raises

***Power Training***

Heavy Upright Rows, 3 sets of 10, 6, 4 reps to failure  
Push Presses, 3 sets of 6, 4, 2 reps to failure

**LOWER BACK*****Power Training***

Straight-Leg Deadlifts, 3 sets of 10, 6, 4 reps to failure  
Good Mornings, 3 sets of 10, 6, 4 reps to failure

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Note: Although these power movements work the lower back directly, they also involve the trapezius and the leg biceps, and help to develop overall strength.

**UPPER ARMS**

Standing Barbell Curls  
Seated Dumbbell Curls  
Close-Grip Press  
Standing Triceps Extensions with Barbell

**FOREARMS**

Wrist Curls  
Reverse Wrist Curls

**ABDOMINALS**

Reverse Crunches, 5 sets of 25 reps





*Until the emergence of modern bodybuilders, this kind of muscular detail was never seen outside of an anatomy chart: the powerful forearms; full, striated triceps; an incredible biceps peak; all three heads of the deltoid; the trapezius muscles below the neck; the wide and powerful latissimus dorsi muscles at the side of the back; the spinal erectors. (Ronnie Coleman)*



*A six-pack extraordinaire. Abs like a bronze statue and well-developed, clearly defined intercostal muscles. (Shawn Ray)*

*The overall shape and proportion of a bodybuilding physique is extremely important, but the whole is also the sum of its parts. Building a complete physique means developing each and every detail of every one of the major body parts.*

*The quality of a bodybuilding physique is in the details: the deltoids, triceps, both heads of the biceps, upper and lower pecs, abdominals, and all the smaller muscles at the side of the torso are totally developed. (Ronnie Coleman)*



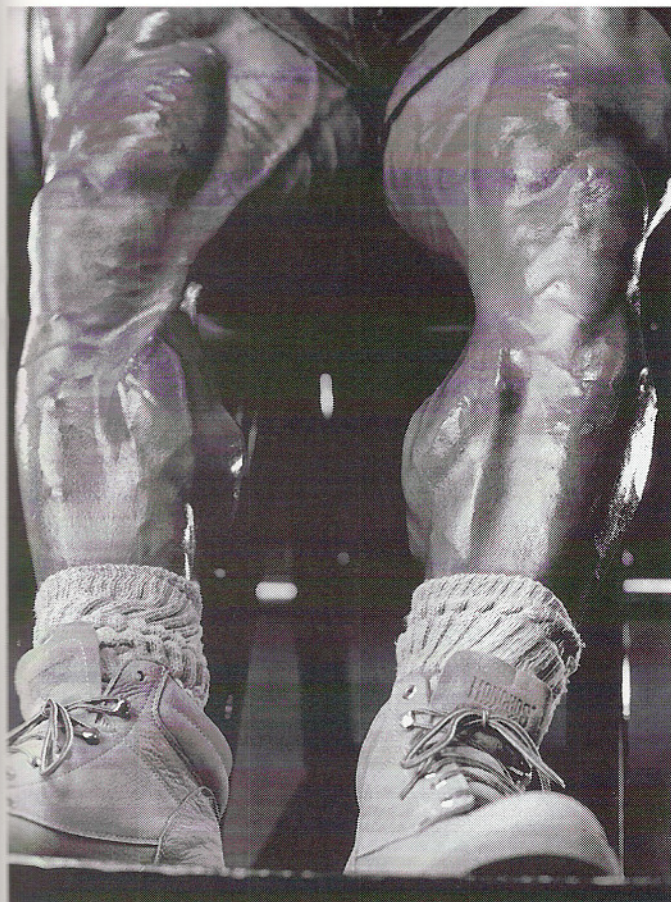


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*A top competition physique needs detailed "tie-ins" between the muscles and muscle groups. Muscles don't just sit next to each other but are tied together and interconnected. Notice the well-defined split between upper and lower pectorals.*  
(Ronnie Coleman)



*The upper and lower legs need to balance each other. In this case, the powerful development and sweep of the quadriceps and adductors would make less of an impression if the calf muscles below them weren't also so huge and detailed.*  
(Nasser El Sonbaty)

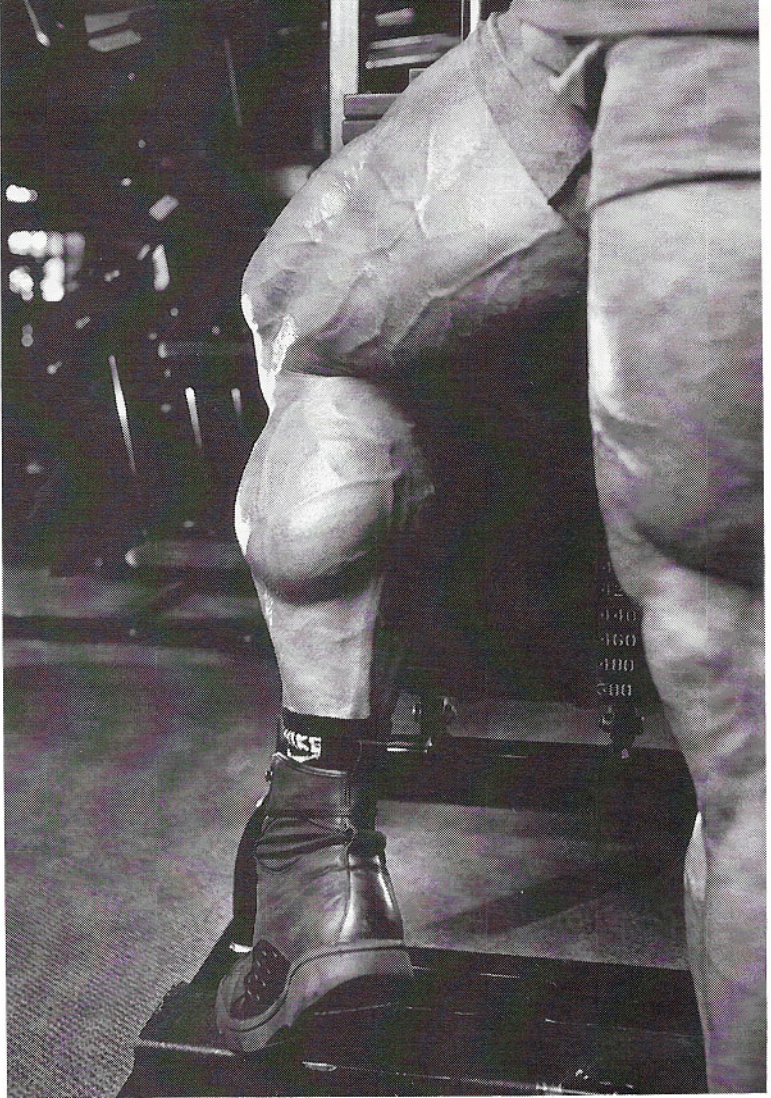


*In the early days of bodybuilding, competitors were concerned about building muscle size and shape. Today, in addition to having mass, champions need detail that makes their muscles look like a Rand McNally road atlas.*  
(Dorian Yates)





*Ideally, the size of your  
calves should be about the  
same as your upper arms.  
(Dorian Yates)*



*An example of a terrific biceps peak.  
Notice how the development of the arm  
is made that much more impressive by  
the overall muscularity of the rest of the  
upper body. (Ernie Taylor)*

