

Just about everyone can appreciate the beautiful flowing lines of Frank Zane at his peak, the regal shape of Serge Nubret, or the classic balance of Lee Labrada. I admire what each of these guys has accomplished. Given a choice though, I'd pick the mind-boggling mass of Paul DeMayo, the freaky thickness of Dorian Yates, or the overpowering size of Victor Richards.

BLASTING for BULK

BY STEVE COLESCOTT

I remember a recurring conversation I'd have with an old friend from the gym, when we talked about what we thought would be the ultimate good time. We agreed it would be a visit to the most serene, chrome-plated super-spa fitness club



Amazing mass meets a perfect frame — Sergio Oliva!

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in the area. We'd go in, pay our guest fees, and then proceed to show the sickly-looking clientele what a hardcore leg workout looked like. We would thrive on the mounting tension as frightened on-lookers watched us do the unthinkable — bust our asses!

Judging by the fact that the place had only a handful of 45s, one could assume that heavy squats were not the exercise of choice here. After a few warm-up sets we'd have to go around the room and collect up enough weight to blast the all-important deep fibers. You know the ones — those fibers deep in your stomach that threaten the vomiting reaction that accompanies good legwork.

My partner would embellish the story further, adding his own special touches. "No doubt our torn sweats would be about two or three days too ripe." Yes, I guess his standard hygiene practices might add to the effect. "...and for a climax, picture this. You and I are grunting through our last set of squats with the plates rattling as we jam each rep up. I'm there screaming at you like I'm your Lamaze coach. Here's where it gets good, Stevie. I've got these capsules left over from Halloween. We bite into them halfway through our set and blood foams out of our mouths. People will freak!"

Just like him to take that ball and run it out of bounds. I nodded anyway (why deprive a man of his dream?) and make a mental note to try to get at least one normal friend. At least this guy knew how to give a halfway decent spot.

Fortunately we never did terrorize that superspa. My friend went on to do well in a local powerlifting meet before he disap-

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peared. From what I hear he has given up pushing iron for pushing a pen in the corporate world.

I've never lost my love for the iron. For a number of years I had an active personal training business. My job involved putting stressed-out executives and chubby housewives into the kind of shape they can live with. From time to time though, I was happy to get an opportunity to work with young athletes hungry to increase their muscle mass.

One teenage kid put on sixty pounds in just under two years (without drugs). While it is easier to put size on someone that age, that's still a lot of muscle! Let me add that this kid showed no signs of good genetics. Maybe better than having designer genes though, is the fact that this kid would do whatever I said — without question. Here are the basics of the mass-building program I put him on.

The first training cycle lasts for four to six weeks and is essential in creating a solid base for later size increases. The emphasis here is on increasing strength. If you can currently perform ten reps in the squat with 315, you will probably be considerably bigger when you can get the same number of reps with 405. In other words, bigger weights mean more mass.

Both personal experience and scientific studies show that intense weight training more than two days in a row tends to lead to over-

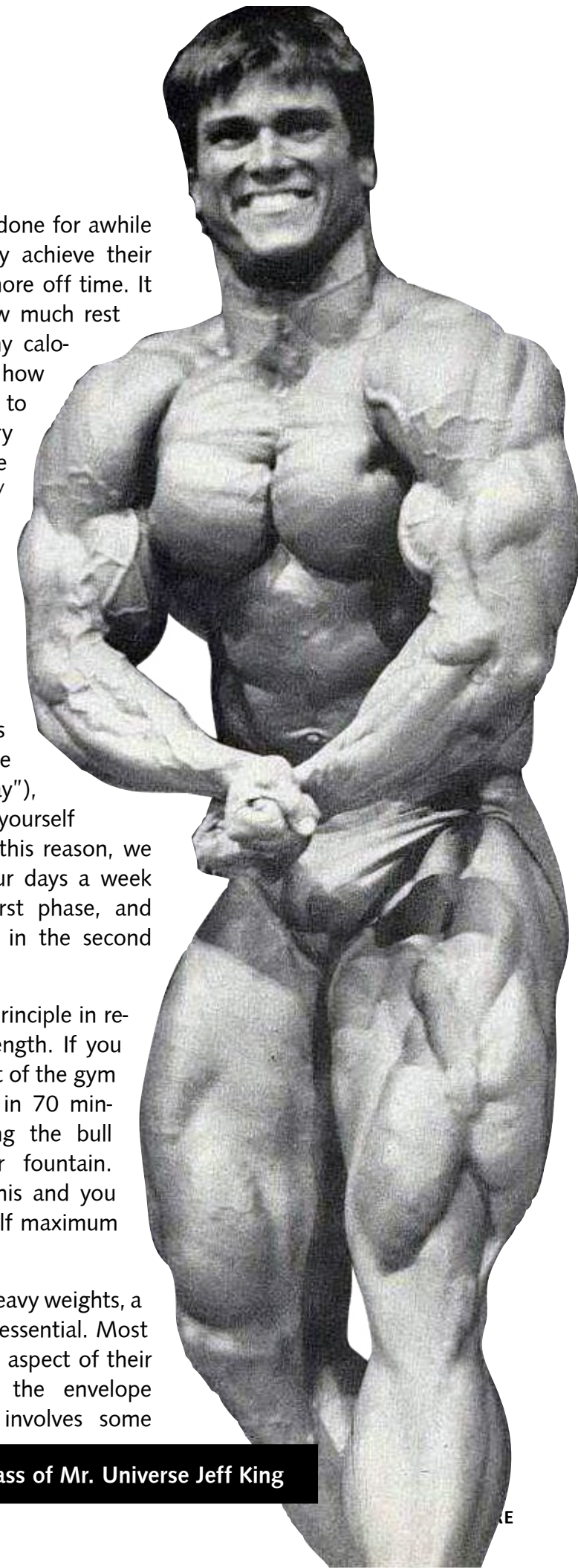
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training. It can be done for awhile but most find they achieve their best results with more off time. It doesn't matter how much rest you get, how many calories you take in, or how hungry you are to get big. Chemistry is chemistry. Once your testosterone/cortisol ratio gets out of whack, desire can't change it. Even if you have a buddy in TJ sending you unmarked packages to your girlfriend's address ("sorry honey, see you on visitor's day"), you need to give yourself time to grow. For this reason, we will be using a four days a week program in the first phase, and a two-on/ one-off in the second phase.

We use the same principle in regard to workout length. If you can't get in and out of the gym (warm-up and all) in 70 minutes, stop shooting the bull around the water fountain. Any longer than this and you are denying yourself maximum gains.

As we plan to use heavy weights, a proper warm-up is essential. Most people neglect this aspect of their workout. Pushing the envelope on your training involves some

The freakish mass of Mr. Universe Jeff King



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risk of injury. Don't be stupid enough to miss three months of training because you couldn't spare ten minutes to warm-up. The goal of a warm-up is to increase the core temperature of a muscle, facilitate the release of synovial fluid in the joints, and prepare yourself mentally and physi-

cally for the range of motion and poundage you will be using in your work sets.

Begin with extremely low-intensity cardio work, such as walking on a treadmill or riding a stationary bike. For those of you who feel getting near a Lifecycle will make you shed muscle - don't worry. We're only going to be going on it for six to ten minutes, just long enough to let our internal body temperature to slightly rise. Trying to contract cold under heavy weights is like stretching a rubber band that's been kept in a freezer. Just ask Kevin Levrone, Vince Taylor or any of a variety of athletes that have suffered muscle tears.

Instead of the traditional high-rep warm-up, perform three to five sets of five reps on your first exercise. The exact number of sets will vary depending on personal warm-up needs

and the weight lifted in your work sets. For instance on a day in which you plan to squat 455, you may do warm-ups of 45x5, 135x5, 185x5, 255x5, 315x5. These warm-ups are performed with very little rest between sets (less than a minute) and should not be really challenging.

After your warm-ups are over, it is time for your first heavy exercise. In this particular phase we want to increase your explosive power, and this can be accomplished by using a technique popularized by Fred Hatfield called compensatory acceleration. As an example, when performing the bench press you would forcibly push the weight from your chest to the finished position, moving the weight quickly but still maintaining a strict arc of movement. Someone capable of a 315 max bench press may only use 50-60% of that (158-189 pounds) but push against the bar with 315 pounds of force. The faster you can move a rep in good form the greater your neurological ability to explosively contract. This is a crucial factor in maximizing strength.

The power rack is an essential tool in the safe performance of explosive lifts. Top choices for explosive movements in the rack includes flat or incline bench presses, top deadlifts and box squats. Box squats have recently surged in popularity. Super-trainer Louie Simmons has successfully used them in training his team of powerlifting champions at Westside Barbell Club, as well as top pro Mike Francois.

After you've warmed up, six sets of two or three reps of your basic explosive movements will cause your strength to soar. Keep up a fast pace with rest periods of less than a minute. Because of the low

reps you should easily be able to keep this pace with no loss in the amount of weight you can use.

The remainder of your workout is going to consist of heavy basic movements. When training heavy, you don't need four or five different exercises to work the entire muscle. Two heavy exercises are usually plenty. An incline press, while it may emphasize the upper portion of your chest, also stresses the mid-chest and lower pec line. In a training phase focusing on the development of brutal strength, trying to work all aspects of a muscle is a waste of time and recuperative energies. Push yourself hard with big weights and you'll call on a substantial number of fibers in that muscle group, regardless of the angle of the bench.

Because of your need to maintain balance of the weight in three different planes of movement and a movement arc during an exercise, free weights are far superior to machines in their ability to stimulate muscle growth. Likewise a dumbbell exercise rates higher in neuromuscular activation than the same movement with a bar. The main criterion in picking exercises is that they lend themselves to increasing weight loads with minimal joint stress. Examples of good choices are flat or incline dumbbell presses, bent rows, lat pulldowns, squats, leg presses, front squats, various deadlifts, good mornings and heavy shrugs.

Routine One: Building Strength

Although low in volume, this isn't a routine just for beginners. It does, however, build a foundation of power that allows you to make the best gains possible in later workout programs. No matter what level you're at, this is a program that you need to do at least once a year to improve your strength.

Day 1 - Upper Body and Arms

Incline Presses - 3 sets of 5 (light warm-up), 5 sets of 2 explosive reps
Pec dips - 3 sets of max reps
Front lat pulldowns - 4 sets of 6-10
Under-grip bent rows - 3 sets of 6-10
Pullover and presses - 3 sets of 6-10
Incline dumbbell curls - 3 sets of 6-10
Finger-grip hang from chinbar - 3 sets for maximum time

Day 2 - Thighs, Calves and Abs

Box squats - 3 sets of 5 (light warm-up), 6 sets of 2 explosive reps
Leg presses - 4 sets of 6-10
Arched-back good mornings - 3 sets of 6-10
Standing calf raises - 4 sets of 6-10
Cable ab crunches 3 sets of 15-25

Day 3 - Rest

Day 4 - Upper Body and Arms

Flat dumbbell presses - 3 sets of 5 (light warm-up), 3 sets of 6-10
Incline flye press - 3 sets of 6-10
Close parallel-grip pulldowns - 4 sets of 6-10
Front plate raises - 3 sets of 6-10
Lying triceps extension 3 sets of 6-10
Dumbbell curls 3 sets of 6-10
Wrist curls 3 sets of 8-12

Day 5 - Lower Back/hips, Thighs, Calves and Abs

Top deadlifts - 3 sets of 5 (light warm-up), 6 sets of 2 explosive reps
Hyperextensions - 3 sets of 6-10
Hack squats - 4 sets of 6-10
Seated calf raises - 4 sets of 10-15
Leg raises 3 sets of 15-25

Days 6 & 7 - Rest



ABOVE The unparalleled mass of Big Ronnie Coleman

BELOW Troy Alves displays impressive mass on a relatively small-boned frame



STEVE COLESCOTT

Fueling for Growth

What good does it do to stimulate growth if you're not providing your body with the quality materials it needs to lay down a new layer of muscle? If you don't know how much food you need to grow, start out by assessing your body fat level. If your belly is already handing over your belt, the last thing you need to do is bulk up. Get a pair of skin fold calipers as your measuring tool. Anything over twenty-percent should tell you to decrease your body fat level. This is bodybuilding, not sumo wrestling.

If your level of body fat is acceptable, you should next figure out your amount of lean body mass - your bodyweight minus the number of pounds of fat you're carrying. Multiple the pounds of lean mass by 15 to estimate your total daily calorie intake. I recommend you base your calories on lean mass instead of on total bodyweight. Your body fat doesn't require maintenance since it IS stored energy. Finding your caloric intake estimate is just a starting point. People's requirements vary according to height, activity level and genetic differences. After two weeks adjust your intake of calories up or down as needed.

There are tons of articles on nutrition, so we don't need to go into specifics here. Just make sure to take in high-quality protein for at least 40-50 percent of your calories. Carbohydrates need to constitute about 30-45 percent of your calories with plenty of slow-burning, complex carbs. Also make sure to include some fibrous vegetables and fruit for maximum health and digestion. Do not try to eliminate fat from your diet. Trying to get below the modest 15-20 percent of your calories

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recommend here might slow your progress. Essential fatty acids from fish oils, macadamia nut oil, olive oil and borage oil sources have dramatic effects on health, appearance and body composition.

Lastly, try to drink three or four quarts of water daily. Hard training and high protein intake require greater water consumption. Remember, water is our body's best medium for chemical reactions, plenty of which are necessary to build muscle.

Let the directions in this article guide you down the road to mass. Now you know how to make proper use of the tools before you. Only your degree of desire and commitment can determine how far down the road you will travel. If you want to get big, show it by never missing your scheduled meals. If you plan to take it to freaky, it can be seen by those last few reps in the squat when your legs are like Jell-O and your lungs are burning. If you want to get to the level where you frighten people at the local spa, you're probably sick and should seek help!

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Routine Two: Building Mass

Now it's time to put your newly acquired explosive strength to work at stimulating growth. For the next four to six weeks we are we are going to be hitting each muscle group with more volume. Therefore we have split the body into three functional parts. Less frequent training allows each bodypart to still achieve maximum recuperation.

Day 1 - Thighs, Lower Back/hips, and Abs

Squats - 3 sets of 5 (light warm-up), 5 sets of 6-10
Hack squats - 4 sets of 6-10
Stiff-legged deadlifts 4 sets of 8-12
Ab crunches - 3 sets of 15-25
Leg raises - 2 sets of 15-25

Day 2 - Rest

Day 3 - Pecs, Side Delts, Triceps, Calves

Incline presses - 3 sets of 5 reps (light warm-up), 5 sets of 6-10
Flat dumbbell presses - 5 sets of 6-10
Dumbbell side laterals - 3 sets of 8-12
Paul Dicks presses - 3 sets of 8-12
Calf presses - 4 sets of 15-20
Seated calf - 4 sets of 10-15

Day 4 - Upper Back, Rear Delts, Traps, Biceps

Moderate-grip lat pulldowns - 3 sets of 5 reps (light warm-up), 4 sets of 6-10
T-bar rows - 3 sets of 6-10
Seated cable rows - 3 sets of 6-10
Standing pulldowns to face - 3 sets of 8-12
Dumbbell shrugs - 3 sets of 8-12
Dumbbell curls - 3 sets of 8-12
Hammer curls - 3 sets of 10-15

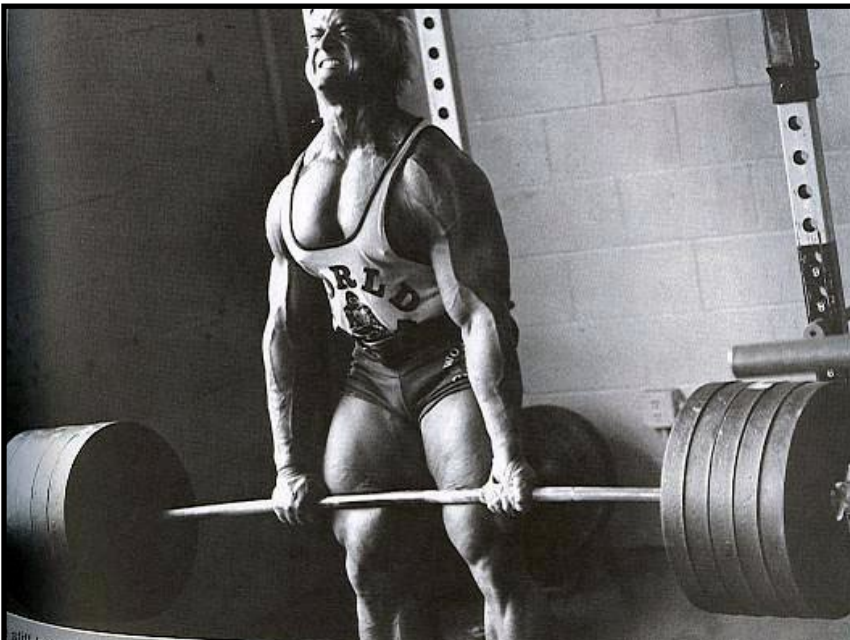
Day 5 - Rest

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Less Commonly Known Exercises



ABOVE Box Squats done with a cambered bar at Westside Barbell **BELOW** Tom Platz adds upper body thickness with heavy Top Deadlifts



Box Squats – In a power rack, squat back into a completely seated position on a bench or padded box. By releasing and retightening your hip muscles and arching your back, you will begin an explosive upward motion. Start with a box set slightly above parallel. Progress to slightly below parallel, and then to deep. (For proper performance of this exercise, take a look at Louie Simmons's squat video. You will see exactly what explosive reps look like.)

Pullover-and-Press – While lying on a flat bench, grab a heavy cambered bar. Keeping elbows in, pull the bar to the upper chest. From here push the bar up as in a close-grip bench press. This exercise involves both a strong contraction and an excellent stretch.

Top Deadlift – Place the pins in the power rack below knee level. With knees wide in a sumo-type stance, and with wrist straps, drive the weight up using the hips. Nothing will thicken your entire back the way this exercise will.

Incline Press Lockouts – By performing partial reps in the rack, you are able to build explosive power that translates to heavier weights in the full-range press. Gradually lower the pins for a greater range of motion.

Paul Dicks Press – This exercise is a combination of triceps extensions and a close-grip bench. Lower bar to your upper chest. Keep your elbows up during the lowering to decrease shoulder rotation. Start the upward movement by raising your hands first. Finish by locking out with a pressing motion.