

## **8 weeks to Bull Sized Traps and Neck - Twin Peaks**

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### **Abstract**

Body building is a unique sport.

What separates us from the rest? We participate in the only sport where the realized goal is to tear the body down.

To break it down to it's core.

No doubt we will go to extreme measures to achieve this end. We deliberately subject ourselves to punishing workouts with one thought in mind...self-destruction.

Body builders literally declare war on themselves.

True body builders describe their workouts as "hardcore". The spirit of hardcore is not an essence of failure. It desires to push past failure, not pull any punches, and begs for more. Its quintessential goal is to wreak havoc on the frame of its wielder.

We are more than body builders...we are body demolitionists!

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### **Anatomy of the Trapezius Complex**

Jacob thoroughly covered the anatomical aspect of the trapezius complex. You can read that amazing edition of Hyperplasia mag, [here](#).

I highly advocate reading that article before attempting this series.

I prefer working traps in my back workout. Many prefer working them with shoulders. The fact is the traps are used heavily in both, so either is fine. It's your personal preference. Often I will switch mine to shoulder day for a change-up.

However, for this series, our focus is prioritization. I recommend for this cycle, working traps either on a day by themselves or first thing when you hit the gym. By doing so you can give the necessarily intensity to complete these routines at their fullest.

I also suggest working heavily on all varieties of dead-lifts and upright rows. Both of which are renowned for adding mass to the trapezius complex.

For example, concentric power-rack dead lifts (better known as rack dead-lifts) allow you to apply massive weight to your lower back, erectors, neck, and traps.

I recommend focusing on this particular style of deadlift during your back workouts over the next 8 weeks.

Editors Note: Strap yourself in and take notes, the following segment is one of the most important concepts known in this sport.

## **My Third Eye**

The first step in achieving any goal is visualizing the task completed in your mind. If you can "see" yourself as successful you can create yourself to be successful.

With the body as well as the mind truly, "You are what you eat". In [Shock Yourself out of the Comfort Zone part 3](#), I discussed sowing seeds of success. We can not only decide where our seeds of success will land, we can also decide what types of fruits those seeds produce and what kind we are going to eat.

This concept is all building up to projection of the Mind's Eye.

Jacob discussed this notion in his article, X-ray vision part 2, and I believe he touched on a very important topic. The further you go in this sport, the more obstacles you will encounter and the more barriers homeostasis will throw at you. Which is why if you truly plan to unleash the beast inside, you have to master brandishing your mind's eye.

For example when you strike a pose, don't just see yourself as you are. See yourself as you want to be! Visualize another inch on your biceps, another striation in your pecs, or another layer off your waist.

Utilizing the mind's eye is going to be a huge part of this program. If you want to reap the most of this series, start mastering the use of your mind's eye.

There are many strategies for manipulating this modus operandi. Visualizing body parts as the living illustration of the power of a beast is a great way to go about mastering this technique. I also like to visualize body parts as mountains or volcanoes, as an unstoppable-unmovable inanimate object that I can literally sculpt and manipulate at my whim.

Action packed scenarios is another excellent means to stimulate the mind's eye. For example during a set of dumbbell flies I may visualize myself squeezing the breath out of a polar bear!! My goal is to show him what a real bear hug is!!!

Entering the bottomless depths of the mind's eye is the portal to the inflowing pain zone. This is an inhuman dimension where mere mortals can not survive.

When someone is in this zone, their eyes reveal it.

I call this the "game face". I can go into a gym and not even notice anyone around me while my set is going on. There can be a supermodel or pro body builder next to me and I wouldn't even notice. This is the level you have to achieve if you want to learn to make the most of your mind's eye. Those who are in this zone don't have time to show off in the gym, or act like fools using sloppy reps to impress others. They are focused at the task at hand, and have elevated their mind to another plateau!

However, the capacity to manipulate your mind's eye can work for good or evil.

A good example of this is, "You can only get so big naturally", or "He's too big to not be on drugs".

I dub this the evil eye. As your limited perceptions spawn in your mind, they will affect your world views. Your world views are then transferred to every thing you believe about yourself.

As this seed of doubt grows, it causes a transformation inside. Instead of using your mind's eye to look in the mirror and see boundless potential, the blurred evil eye sees nothing but defeat and limitations. The evil eye is responsible for excuses. And excuses are nothing more than crutches of the uncommitted.

The mind's eye is an instrument of infinite proportions. It can be used for either good or evil. Remember though, that what you see with your third eye is the direct creation you will inherit.

As I said, controlling the mind's eye is going to be a substantial part of our curriculum! With that being said let's begin!

**Phase one:**

## **Triceratops Traps!**

The name Triceratops means "three horn face", and rightfully so. A short horn on the nose is supplemented by two larger horns on the forehead, averaging three feet in length. These massive beasts also brandish one of God's most formidable defense mechanisms...a seven and a half foot neck frill composed of a solid sheet of bone. Many of these neck frills possess barnacle-like knobs as well, adding further protection.

Its purpose is no mystery at all. To lacerate the flesh of any predator who dared cross its path!

During phase one we are going to concentrate on building a trap complex that would make the mighty triceratops drool in envy!

### **Exercise one:**

*Seated Dumbbell Shrugs supersetted with Static Cable Shrug- 3 sets*

The vascular collapse this training sequence provides is unstoppable.

Seated Dumbbell shrugs are a potent weapon in the war we are waging. As you execute exercise two, really focus on contracting against the stretch. I covered this method in ["8 weeks to bigger pecs 2- The Guideline"](#).

This may entail selecting a more moderate weight and taking time to find the point where you really feel the weight pulling on your traps. When you have established the precise spot, you will feel as though the weights are lightly pulling on the targeted muscle.

Now contract your traps against that pull! Perform a higher rep range of 12-20 reps for this phase of the operation. We really want to focus on the stretch and contracting against it. As your shrug the load, emphasize hoisting your shoulders as high as you possibly can. I see so many people just "going through the motions" with shrugs. There is a time for power shrugs, but for now, we really want to enhance feeling the muscle burn.

As soon as the pain becomes unbearable drop the dumbbells and head immediately to a low cable station. Select a fairly heavy weight, and complete one repetition of a cable shrug. Your goal is to now maintain that static state as long as possible. Aim for a weight that you can bear for 10-30 seconds. When you can take no more, set the bar down, lower the weight by 35-50% and perform an additional static squeeze for total obliteration.

The pain will really start searing now, but remember you have to uphold the weight in a solid peaked state. Trapezius training is similar to calf training. If you want optimal development you have to peak hard at the very top of the muscles range of motion. The peak of any concentric movement is the focus of a dynamic tension curve in which the muscular tension required increases throughout the range of motion until the end of concentric contraction. By emphasizing the end of the concentric contraction we can literally shape the muscle!

Skimping out on this important detail will make the difference between a champion set and a sloppy set.

### **Exercise Two-**

*Concentric Hack Machine Hiss Shrugs- 3 sets*

Breathing is of the utmost importance when performing this exercise. Nevertheless, if you're ready to turn carve mountain peaks on your traps, look no further.

This movement will really allow you to focus on power and strength.

In ["Shock Yourself out of the Comfort Zone Part Three"](#) I described in detail how to implement the concentric power rack technique.

Our objective with this method is to focus heavily on concentric aspect of the range of motion. Concentric is simply the contraction of a muscle resulting in its shortening.

I also believe this is a critical time to utilize your mind's eye. Really focus and envision your traps becoming twin mountain peaks!

As you painfully proceed through the set, visualize that you are literally adding more and more stone layers to your trapezius with every grueling rep!

Go deep into the pain zone, being sure that you are raising the pads up as high as your range of motion can muster with each and every repetition.

I recommend a weight that allows you to fail around 10 reps. After failure, use the assistance of the safety stop to rest-pause out as many reps as your pain threshold can possibly endure.

**Exercise three:**

*Smith Machine Behind the Back Shrugs- 4 sets*

The Smith Machine can offer the renowned Behind the Back Shrugs shrug a unique range of motion. It will also allow you to really pile on the weight.

After you have selected the weight you will use, unlock the bar from the smith rack.

I prefer to push my pelvis out during this movement to stop the bar from rubbing against my body. The range you push out will vary from individual to individual. The central idea push your pelvis out far enough from the machine that you are isolating the traps, but not losing shrugging power or contraction in the process.

Pyramid the weight in a rep scheme of 10-8-6-4.

### **Exercise Four:**

*Neck curls- 3 sets*

Neck curls offer direct resistance to the collar region. They are a cure to the dreaded giraffe neck syndrome, more commonly known as "pencil neck".

Flexion capacity is the key to the layout of this exercise. Flexion is a bending of the joint resulting in a decrease of angle. In other words, as is the case with the neck curl, it is the forward movement of the head at the joint just below the skull. Flexion of the neck will target the Sternocleidomastoid muscles.

To perform this, lie flat on a bench and allow your head to dangle off the edge of the bench. With a short bar or cambered bar in hand, place the center of the bar on your forehead. You have two options here. You can either use a squat pad or towel to cushion the weight or you can take a close grip and allow the backs of your hands to rest on your forehead. Either way you want the resistance of the weight to be centered on your forehead.

Now, simply curl your neck up and down. This technique requires super strict form. The neck area is really susceptible to injuries, so don't just jolt your neck up and down. Perform highly controlled reps, especially on the negative portion of the range of motion.

I suggest a higher rep range here, in the 20-30 range. If you've never done these before, I recommend just warming up with the bar and slowly upping your weight. It won't take much to achieve the result we are looking for.

### **Phase Two:**

## Strength Beyond Strength

Weighing in at over a ton, the path of fighting bison is one that no man would dare cross.



The bison's massive head is its most characteristic feature. Its forehead bulges due to its convex-shaped frontal bone. Its shoulder hump, dwindling bowl-like to the haunches, is supported by unusually long spinal vertebrae.

Encompassing powerful neck and shoulder muscles extends a great coat of curly brown fur, and over the head, like an immense hood, grows a shock of black hair. Its forequarters are higher and much heavier than its haunches. A mature bull stands about 6 1/2 feet (2 at the shoulder, is about 9 feet in length, and weighs more than 2,000 pounds.

After phase two you will be in route to developing a neck and trap region that would make the mighty bison think twice before butting heads with you!

### **Exercise One:**

*Standing Strapped Dumbbell Shrugs- 4 sets*

These are the true powerhouse trap exercise. Our focus here is sheer might. All four of these sets need to reflect an attitude of utmost barbarity. You are going to be strapping some serious weight onto your body that will in turn slap serious meat on your neck and traps!

Straps are a huge advantage in the battle for bigger traps.

I know that straps tend to be shunned, but it's a fact that the trapezius area has greater endurance capabilities than the forearms. I only recommend the use of straps for trapezius training when the goal is the usage of maximum poundages. In other words if you are going to apply the utmost resistance to your trapezius, you need to use straps. The truth is if you don't use this tool your forearms will give out before your traps are fully exhausted.

**Editors Note:** Once again a great point. Its how you use the tools of the trade that make a champion.

The next benefit this exercise offers is that it is performed in the standing position, which allows you to use momentum to help achieve contractions with heavier weight.

That is why I describe this exercise as "the base of the mountain".

It literally forms a cornerstone in which to build trap height and density upon!

As you wrap your straps around the colossal dumbbells, contemplate the sheer power you are about to muster. In your minds eye visualize grasping your hands around a thick rope in preparation to partake in a game of "tug of war" with your greatest foe. You have to fight for your life with all you can dig out of your soul. You are going heavy, but you are going training smart. That means shrugging the weight high, and taking the set to total collapse.

I want a rep scheme of 8-6-6-4.

Think heavy, perform big, and reap the reward of pain.

### **Exercise Two:**

*Reverse Old School Shrugs- 3 sets*

The isometric tension available with this exercise is phenomenal.

Old School Shrugs are the invention of body building legend, Robby Robinson. They offer a unique range of motion that targets the trapezius in an inclined position.

Reverse Old School shrugs are a variation of this theme and heavily target the middle trapezius area. Since they are performed on an incline bench they increase the stretch factor of the movement. This offers more tension potential, which allows the muscle to contract more forcefully.

To implement this variation, face forward on an incline bench.

With dumbbells in hand, shrug the load up, squeezing the middle traps together. As you compress your trapezius together, imagine there is a snake crawling up the middle of your back and you are going to crush it using your traps as a snare!

With each rep, deliver the death blow as you constrict the life out of his slithering frame. Hold the contraction for 2-4 seconds, and then proceed with the negative, allowing your arms to return to their full extension.

**Exercise Three:**

*Reverse Barbell Shrug supersetted with Forward Barbell Shrug combined with concentric power rack training- 3 sets*

The pinnacle of trapezius labor is the use of extreme weight for a higher volume of repetitions. The following utilization of the concentric power rack training technique in this instance will achieve that very goal!

Place the safety racks so that you can let your arms hang down with a barbell in hand while having the least amount of space between the safety rack and the barbell. In other words you should have a miniscule amount of scope between the safety bars and a free hanging barbell.

Begin by this cycle by utilizing behind-the-back barbell shrugs. Pick the bar up and shrug all the way to the top and squeeze your traps hard at the top of each rep. Once you hit failure, set the barbell down on the safety rack, turn immediately around and perform barbell shrugs to the front. You'll find you can still lift the barbell because shrugs to the front exploit more stabilizer muscles into play than shrugs behind the back do. Continue to failure again.

Once failure to the front is achieved, begin employing the concentric power rack technique. Continue performing this shock, until you can't possibly shrug anymore!

In summary, go to failure to the back, immediately turn around, and go to failure to the front, then rest-pause to go past failure. Remember to set the safety bar up so when you do your rest-pause reps the safety bar is just below where the barbell hangs when you are fully extended. This will ensure your traps are doing the work and not your lower back!

**Exercise Four:**

*Neck Harness Thera Band Raises- 3 sets*

Thera bands are another awesome tool for building up the neck region. In this instance we will be using them for neck extension resistance. This is simply a straightening of a joint which results in an increase of angle.

By moving the head backward at the joint just below the skull we can effectively target the Splenius muscles.

I prefer to use a neck harness with the thera bands, but if you don't have one, you can simply tie it around your head. Another option is to use a cable attachment.

Facing a pole or low cable, you can start this motion on all fours, or standing up slightly bent over. Attach one end of the thera band or cable around the neck harness, and the other end on a low cable station or low point on a pole.

Stay far enough away from the pole or low cable so that the thera band or cable is giving proper resistance. The further back you go, with the thera band the more resistance you will create.

One rep involves moving your head away from the low pulley by hyperextending your neck. Finish the repetition by bending your neck forward until your chin touches upper chest.

I prefer thera bands or cables over weights on a neck harness as the motion is more natural. As I said the neck is susceptible to injury. This is one muscle where it is better to be safe than sorry.

As you increase strength, you can either up the weight or attach more bands for more resistance.

The other advantage these offer is constant tension, which stimulates the neck muscles in an optimal manner.

I rarely count reps when I'm doing these. I just go for a higher range and a good burn, keeping my reps solid and tight.

### **Phase Three:**

#### **Withstanding the Blow**



*"If I were a boxer, this would be one of the areas I would concentrate on most. This is one thing you can have control over. If you watch "Classic KOs" on ESPN, you can't help but notice that what separates out the guy still standing from the guy on the ground is strong neck musculature....Bottom line, if your head doesn't move with a punch, you can't get KO'd. Look at Gatti, look at Foreman. I remember seeing Foreman training by pulling a tractor behind him!"*- Margaret Goodman, MD, Ringside Physician and Chairman of the Medical Advisory Board of the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

Ok, so, pulling a tractor may be a little extreme, but look at where it got him! It got him to the professional level! The point being if you want extreme results you have to be willing to do extreme things.

That's what separates the body builder from the average gym goer. We are willing and able to go above and beyond!

No doubt, strong neck and trap muscles are an invaluable asset to boxers. Why exactly did Foreman go to such extreme measures to train his iron chin? The answer is simple; *competitive drive*.

This is another means of the body builder. It can come in all shapes and sizes. For example, some prefer to think of their previous goals as competition, while others prefer to envision actual people. Neither is better than the other, the best one is the one that motivates you most!

For example, you can watch "Pumping Iron" one time and know exactly what's driving Lou Ferrigno...an extreme desire to take the crown from Arnold. You can see this clearly in his training style. In fact the key paraphrase that motivated Louie came from his dad..."Remember Louie, whatever you're doing in the gym, Arnold could be doing twice as hard".

But then you look at Arnold in the same video, and he is totally into competing with himself! He could care less about outside competition; his drive comes from competing against his current weaknesses. You can see this reflected as Arnold is tanning on the beach. A trainer of his says approaches him and says, "I'm leaving and am going to teach Louie everything you stole from me". Arnold's response? "I'll see you when you get back", as he rolls back over and goes back to sleep. The next time you see Arnold in the video, he's destroying his back in the gym! His drive comes from beating himself!

The point is discover which one is better for you. If it's outside competition, use your mind's eye to envision that same person training right next to you. Your goal is to not let them win at any cost, and raise the notches of intensity above what they can withstand.

If you prefer competing against yourself, envision smashing through current chains that are holding you down!

**Exercise one:**

[Barbell Shrugs to the Front](#) - 4 sets

We're getting back to the basics. The barbell shrug is the old school trap builder of yore. And for good reason. It allows for the most weight and power!

I advise the use of straps here because we are going as heavy as possible. Restrict from cheating until absolute failure is upon you. Remember though, effective cheating means extreme emphasis on the negative.

After failure, re-rack the barbell and strip the amount of weight in half.

Assume the shrug position again. But for this drop you will do partial reps at the top of the range of motion. This will make your traps pop out of your shirt!

Your head will start shaking as the burn pierces through your neck. This is why I said calf and trap training are similar. I don't start counting reps until the shaking begins!

If you have a timer nearby, apply the [Count to 60 seconds and grow man grow!](#) technique.

Let's say I aim for 45 seconds of partial reps, and I find I am at total exhaustion at 30 seconds in. I will then hold the failure rep statically for the remaining 15 seconds! Remember with this technique, the goal is to keep the muscle under tension for the allotted time! If all you can do is hold the weight statically that's fine. Just do whatever it takes to fulfill that time limit!

### **Exercise Two:**

*Seated Alternating Dumbbell Shrugs supersetted with [Barbell Overhead Shrugs](#) - 3 sets*

I prefer to use a military press station for this superset. Alternating shrugs really allow you to isolate and hammer each trapezius peak.

Side-to-side chins, one arm laterals, alternating bicep curls, one-legged calf raises all have one thing in common...isolation. Dividing one side of a muscle group is a great way to stun your body. Separating multi-lateral muscles in this manner is an excellent way to kindle hypertrophy via isolation exercises.

Super setting with overhead shrugs is the perfect combination for crowning upper trap hypertrophy and for stimulating the neck region.

As you shrug up, try to keep your elbows locked. Reach high and squeeze your traps together at the top of the range of motion.

### **Exercise Three:**

*[Cable Shrugs](#) supersetted with [Cable Upright Rows](#)- 3 sets*

Here we are combining two classics to create a masterpiece.

By pre-exhausting the targeted region first in this manner, we can be sure the mass building properties of the upright row will be heavily focused on the traps.

#### **Exercise Four:**

*Plate Abduction*-2 sets for each side.

The neck serves two purposes:

- A pipeline for blood, nerves, food and air
- A platform or pedestal to hold-up and support the head

If our goal is to increase the muscularity of the neck region the logical procedure would be to increase the necks ability to support the head!

Lateral Flexion meets that ideal perfectly!

A Lateral movement moves away from the midline of the body. In our exercise it involves moving the head toward the shoulder (left or right) at a joint below the skull.

Begin this exercise by lying sideways on a flat bench. Allow your head and neck to dangle off the edge of the bench.

Position a plate on the top half of your head, holding it in place with your hand as you complete reps.

The only rule is not let the edge of the plate rest directly on your temple (this can cause extreme headaches). It can lay over it, but do not let the plate dig into the temple as you perform reps. If the bare plate is uncomfortable on your head you can fold up a towel in a newspaper fashion and rest the plate on the towel.

Similar to the neck curl you want nice controlled reps, especially on the eccentric portion. Start with a small weight and work your way up.

Again, I suggest focusing on higher reps. If you want to make this more hardcore, after failure, drop the plate and continue doing reps without weight. After failure in that manner, simply hold your neck statically at the top of the movement.

**Phase Four:**



During phase four we're going for an all out muscle blitz; a total sack to the trap complex. (Yes, those are my boys in the picture! Go OSU!)

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**Exercise one:**

*Up and Down the Rack Shrugs-* Repeat cycle one to three times

Hyperplasia here we come! This is HIT at its finest. As I said in "Shock Yourself Part 3", in my opinion HIT is more a method of training for Hyperplasia more so than Hypertrophy.

This is why I call it:

**Hyperplasia**

**Induced**

## Training

The following blitz is going to attack the entire neck and trap muscle locality in an unorthodox manner.

This is a favorite of mine on a slow day at the gym. You're going to be hogging the dumbbell rack, so my suggestion is to perform this HIT attack on a Saturday night or Sunday afternoon, or whenever your gym is at it's slowest.

Begin by picking a really light weight that you can easily perform 20 reps for. Let's say for our example that is 25 lbers.

Perform 25 reps and set the dumbbells down. Now jump 10 lbs, and perform 20 reps with the 35 lbers. Next, jump 10 more lbs. grab the 45's and perform 15 reps. After that bump up 10 lbs grab the 55's and execute 10 reps. Ok, the easy part is over!

The key is to continue jumping in weight by 10's. In other words after each mini-set you will increase the dumbbell weight by 10 lbs.

After you pyramid to the point that you are at a weight that is causing your to fail at 10 reps (remember there is NO rest between these initial jumps!), continue increasing the dumbbells by 10, but from this point on your can induce failure between 2-9 reps.

Continue in this manner until you have reached a point where you can no longer perform at least two reps, or you max out the dumbbells your gym has to offer! Oh, one last note you can rest pause after you've pyramided past the 10 rep mark.

Now, you're half way done!

Back down the rack you go...all the way back to the 25 lbers. or wherever you began. Stick to a rep range of 2-9 again, rest-pausing as much as needed on the way back down.

So in summary:

1. Follow an ascending pyramid rep scheme of 25-20-15-10.
2. Continue ascending in 10 lb. increments failing between 2-9 reps. Use rest-pause as needed.
3. Once maximum ascension is achieved, begin descending in weight, failing between 2-9 reps, using rest-pause as needed.

Even though we are performing an extreme volume of reps, there is one thought you need to stay focused on throughout the entirety of the set!

### Elevation!

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Get those delts up! It's going to be challenging keeping your mind focused on that as you progress through this ascending/descending nightmare, but that is the only thought you have to keep on your mind. The rest of your energy needs to be focused on the "do or die" mentality.

It seems like a lot, but once you get the set going it really flies. This workout is fast, but to get the most out of it you really need to stay focused on elevation. Hyperplasia is not easy to induce. It thrives in the realm of radical. Treat this monster set as such and you'll split fibers!

**Phase Five:** Repeat Phase One

**Phase Six:** Repeat Phase Two

**Phase Seven:** Repeat Phase Three

**Phase Eight:** Repeat Phase Four

## **See The Future!**

Can you see in the future? Can you manipulate what is to come?

That very notion is the life-force of the Third eye and the doctrine of faith.

"...all things are possible to him that believeth."

No one can see all impending events. But we have been given the power to overcome any obstacle and achieve any goal that we put our hearts and minds too. We have been given the power to control our faith!

One potential tragedy we must contemplate is the realization that no matter how much we want achieve something, without faith we will never accomplish it.

For example, if my dream is to have 20 inch biceps, yet I continually believe that that is impossible to achieve that naturally, you can bet I never will. But at the same time if I can get up in the morning, re-establish my goal, and use my mind's eye to see myself with 20 inch arms, I can rest assured I'm seeing my own future!

" And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. "



This is an important concept to ponder. A mustard seed is smaller than the size of a one of the letters you are reading in this article.

For body builders this concept illustrates that if we can just have faith in ourselves we can move mountains. But there is a much deeper consideration here.

If it only takes a slight amount of faith to move mountains that also signifies it only takes a minute amount of unbelief to assure the mountain isn't budging an inch!

Fellow athletes let's not fall by the wayside. Let's believe we can succeed!

Keep the scene alive,

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