

Questions and Answers

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Introduction

I get a tremendous amount of emails everyday. I try and answer each one because I appreciate the time it takes someone to write me a letter. It's a great high for me to talk to someone about their progress, and it gives me a lot of insight into what works and what doesn't. So I've decided to feature a few of the questions I get each month in the current issue of Beyond Failure Magazine.

You've Just Won a Million Dollars!

Question: Jacob,

You may have just won a million dollars! All you have to do is.....

Answer: Damn, when am I going to learn to just delete those emails! Now, back to answering real questions!

Power lifting = Bodybuilding!???

Question: Hello Jacob,

1. A person at my gym told me that power lifting is the same thing as bodybuilding. He also told me that I spend too much time on working small muscles like biceps. What is your opinion on this subject?

Mike H.

Answer: Hi Mike,

You ask a very valid question. I will address your first question by comparing one elite athlete from the sport of power lifting to one elite athlete in the sport of bodybuilding.

The first competitor I will quote is the great Shawn Ray. He is considered by many to be the greatest bodybuilder to ever grace the stage! Here is a quote from him in regards to one rep max benching.

" The Bench Press is the most overrated exercise there is. The biggest mistake people make in this sport is getting hung up on how much they can bench. That's where injuries are caused and frankly how much you can max does not pertain to this sport. You might be able to bench all out, but when you take your shirt off you'd better have the pecs! " - Shawn Ray

So far this is completely contradictory to power lifting. Shawn Ray is saying that he could care less about his one rep max. His main concern is how big his muscles are, not primarily the weight he is lifting. Power lifting is a sport where how much you can lift is literally everything!

The second athlete I will quote is Louie Simons. He is not only a great power lifter, but also a great power lifting instructor! He foresees the training of some of the best strength athletes in the world. Here is a quote from him on what his opinion on muscle growth is:

" Things like slow repetitions and negatives just make you sore! They will increase size, but they do nothing to increase strength, so we don't do them! We at Westside don't concern ourselves with muscle growth!

Lets break down the quotes here.

1. Shawn Ray doesn't care about one rep maxes - Power lifting however is centered around one rep maxes!
2. Louie Simons doesn't care about muscle growth - Bodybuilding is centered around muscle growth!

In other words bodybuilding is a sport of symmetry and muscularity and power lifting is a sport of one rep maxes and purely compound lifts. We concentrate heavily on negatives and heavily incorporate isolation exercises. Power lifters couldn't give a damn about those things. For instance, why would a power lifter care about pre-fatigue? And yet it is one of the most used shocking principles in our sport. In fact half of the year during contest season we usually keep our reps between 6-15 for fear of injury, during contest season for the power lifter, the training is the complete opposite!

In case you are not sure about the two great athletes I am discussing, here is a picture of Mr. Simons lifting some serious weight! Also here is Mr. Ray tearing the stage up!

Now your second question actually clearly addresses my point. The person who advised you has a very strongly set power lifting mentality. Therefore he advised you to not concentrate heavily on smaller muscle groups. Guess what? Every muscle in your entire body is just as important as the next in this sport! Your biceps and triceps need as much attention as your back and chest do. This is a sport centered around symmetry. A guy with huge pecs and no arms will screw up 99 percent of his poses! You literally cannot ignore anything in your body. We even make sure that symmetry within a muscle group is peaked.

In conclusion as great as the sport of power lifting is, it is by no means the same as bodybuilding. In fact they are completely different activities which require completely different mentalities.

Need A Substitution for A Rope!

Question: Dear Jacob,

First thank you very much for all the new exercises! I really want to do the rope press downs and the neck pulls, but I just received my home gym for my birthday and only have a lat pull down attachment. Can I just use a straight bar for the low pulley neck pulls and will it be just as effective?

Darren

Answer: Hi Darren,

That is a fantastic question. You could certainly use a straight bar, but there is no need to. Simply take a towel and weave it through the hole at the end of the chain on your machine till half of it is on one side, and half is on the other. Then use the towel, scrunched up at both ends the same way you would use a rope! Home made attachments are easy money. You can also construct a one arm attachment. Just grab a piece of wood from your house that's about as long as a pencil and thick

enough to handle the weight you will use. Drill a hole in either end. Place some extremely sturdy rope in either hole and attach it to your machine. I remember I used to get extremely inventive when I had my first home gym. Good luck!

High Reps To Get Cut!

Question: Hi Mr. Wilson,

Is it true that high reps cut you up. Should you use them to burn fat?

Answer: Let me start out by saying that there actually is some validity to the old high rep cutting method. Just not the way it is normally portrayed. What I mean is that high reps will not actually burn fat off of an area or make it more cut. Obviously you need an overall dieting and workout program which is designed to lower body fat to do this. The validity however is determined by the situation we as athletes find ourselves in during pre-contest preparation.

The situation definitely has to effect how we lift. During this time, we are eating less, increasing our cardio and or lowering our carbohydrates. All this spells out one thing, and that is depletion! In fact usually by the end of a training split an athlete is extremely depleted! When fatigue and depletion set in, it means that two aspects of our training are effected. The first is that the chances of us getting injured from heavy lifting have increased and the second is that our ability to lift more weight is effected due to lower muscle energy stores.

When the poundage's slightly drop(due to either lower energy stores or a caution against injury), one of the best ways to make up for this is to pick up the pace of the workout. Which means slightly higher reps and less rest between sets. Therefore, in the off season you may see an athlete train in the 4-8 or 4-10 repetition range. During pre-contest I usually never recommend going below 6 repetitions, and frequently hover around the 12-15 repetition range. Again, not because higher reps actually burn fat off of an area, but to make up for the slight drop in poundage's. This is just one of many ways to maintain and even gain muscle on a cut, when your stores are low. There are many others, each of which will be discussed in future issues!

Good luck!

Optimally Use Cheat Reps!

Question: Dear Jacob,

My Friend is constantly using cheat reps for biceps, and I feel he is using them wrong, do you have any pointers on how to incorporate them best.

Mick

Answer: Hi Mick!

There is certainly a plethora of ways to incorporate this shocking method and reap the rewards of growth in turn! However, you asked me what I feel is the best way to utilize them, and specifically discussed biceps. So I will first address this firstly. Understand that perhaps the most difficult muscle fibers to stimulate growth in are fast twitch IIb fibers. These are hit best with heavier weights. The key to stimulating them in the biceps region is to choose a weight that is heavy, but also a weight you can control and work with. In my opinion working with a weight constitutes at least 6 total repetitions. Now, cheat repetitions allow a person to extend a set that would have otherwise stopped short of this necessary goal.

Therefore you can choose a weight you can only lift 4-5 times and lift it 6-8 times or perhaps even more than that. And if you choose a weight you can fail on in the 6 rep range, you can probably extend the set safely to 10 repetitions. However, with all this in mind, one must follow a specific procedure before carelessly applying this shocking principle. You see if you do apply it in a lackadaisical manner you will risk injury and also not maximize growth!

Step By Step Plan For Cheat Repetitions Using Heavier Weights(Using Biceps as an Example)

- 1.** The first thing you want to do is to choose a weight you can only lift 4-6 repetitions. This is the most important aspect of incorporating cheat reps! You see the mentality when using heavy weights is to cheat from rep one on! You are essentially wasting your time by doing this. Believe me, you do not, and I repeat do not want to start cheating until you absolutely cannot maintain perfect form.
- 2.** When you cannot perform a strict repetition any longer then you should start incorporating cheat reps. But the key here is how you bring them into play! I see so many people reach failure and then start throwing the weight up and down like mad men! That's not the way to do it! Lets say I reach failure on rep 6, then on 7 I will ever so slightly use my body to get out of the hole, once I am out of the hole then my biceps will be able to again strictly lift the weight I am using. So lets say that I have lowered the weight all the way. I will then cheat perhaps only on the first 8th to 6th of the rep and then surprisingly my biceps will be able to handle the rest for the remainder of the movement. Why is this important? Because the whole point of going past failure is to force your body to stimulate more and more muscle fibers in your biceps, not your deltoids or back. So the stress must still be optimally placed here.
- 3.** On each consecutive rep after failure you will have to cheat slightly more. Again the key is to use as little help from your supporting muscle groups as possible!
- 4.** Continue cheating until you must completely rely on momentum and then stop.

Tip: I also suggest emphasizing the negative repetition when utilizing cheat reps. This is an unparalleled way to stimulate more growth!

The example I gave above can be applied whether you are going heavy or lighter, and on all muscle groups. It still works out the same. The goal is to stimulate more

growth then you would have in the " target " muscle group. Way too many people use cheat reps and get absolutely nothing done, because their concentration lacks. This is usually due to a lack of understanding in regards to their goal

Success In Bodybuilding!

Question: Hi Jacob,

There are so many concepts you discussed in your assessment sheets. What do you feel is the most important thing a bodybuilder can have in order to be successful in this sport? I'm asking because I really would like to compete at a high level.

Rick

Answer: Hi Rick,

The prototype bodybuilder must have two key ingredients for success.

1. He or She Must Have an Uncannily High Pain Threshold.

I'm not going to sugar coat this. You need guts in this sport. The iron jungle demands you to put yourself through trials that most people would never dream of putting themselves through. Therefore one must be able to literally shut pain off or at least thrive in it, because there is no way around this.

2. He or She must have ice water in their veins.

I have spoken to many pros in several different sports. Guess what almost all of them have in common? Some coach along the lines told them that they didn't have what it took to be a professional. Either they were too small, would never be fast enough, or just plain didn't have the talent. Now considering that they are now professionals it is apparent that their coaches were dead wrong! What am I trying to say? If you are going to enter this sport, then you need to focus on the goal, not on what someone says you cannot do because of genetics or even what you begin to tell yourself. Mike Katz in pumping Iron had this to say about what gave him success in bodybuilding:

" I'm like a dog. You can kick a dog so long and he's either going to roll over and die, or he's going to bite back! I'm the type of dog that bites back! "

What I am saying is don't allow anyone to tell you, that you can't do it! Have ice water in your veins and keep pumping until you are satisfied with what you have accomplished. And that has to be your standard, not someone else's!

Sincerely

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