

Monumental Masterpiece: Creating a Cerebral Portrait

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"Symmetry" is Synonymous with "Body Builder"

The two expressions co-exist on a plane of attraction. One can not possibly subsist without the other.

Symmetry is what separates number one from number two; Champion from second best. Proportional attributes are the leading factors that literally make or break the physique.

Muscular balance is the epidemy of the phrase "Body Builder".

How does one achieve a balanced physique?

The answer is simply, By shaping the muscle!

Shaping an object is simply defined as giving a particular form to that object, or to cause the object to conform to a particular appearance or pattern.

Why shouldn't our physiques apply to this definition? Truly they are literally clay in our mind's eye, just waiting to be sculpted.

As body builders our goal is to shape our muscles to be in direct proportion to one another for the purpose of symmetry.

Sculpting Your Physique

Are there limitations to sculpting our bodies?

I firmly believe the answer to this question lies only within the limitations we inflict upon ourselves.

Perhaps the greatest artist of all time, Michelangelo Buonarroti, had quite a unique perspective when it came to master minding his priceless sculptures.

Michelangelo believed that every piece of marble had within it a basic God-given design just waiting to be expressed.

He believed that inherent in every piece of marble was a basic design that has been there since the beginning of time. His belief was that it was his job as a sculptor to simply knock away the protective coating around that basic design and let it come into being.

This mentality can be directly related to us as body builders. Michelangelo was a master of using his mind's eye. From a piece of marble he was able to see the sculpture as it was always supposed to look. He mealy chiseled away the pieces that did not belong.

In retrospect we too can use our mind's eye to sculpt our bodies as we want them to appear. Chiseling away what does not belong and creating a virtual masterpiece of balanced perfection.

Understanding how to go about crafting these symmetrical attributes needs to start with a basic understanding of the...

The Machinery Involved in Body Movements and Responses

The Human Body is a magnum opus of Creation. Its complexity by far out classes our most advanced technologies. One cell in your body is more intricate than the space shuttle. Each cell of the human body is an elaborate chemical computer. It has its own power management structures, read-only and random-access memory. Each cell communicates with neighbors and with environment.

Combine that with the fact that your body consists of trillions of cells, working together to achieve existence, operating through incredibly intricate systems, all managed from the control center- the brain- and you have in your power an artwork of precision machinery.

'Without a doubt, the most complex information-processing system in existence is the human body. If we take all human information processes together, i.e. conscious ones (language, information-controlled, deliberate voluntary movements) and unconscious ones (information-controlled functions of the organs, hormone system), this involves the processing of 10^{24} bits daily. This astronomically high figure is higher by a factor of 1,000,000 [i.e., is a million times greater] than the total human knowledge of 10^{18} bits stored in all the world's libraries.'-Dr Werner Gitt (4)

Included inside each of us is a biologic chemical plant of cosmological complexity:

"The human body has a dynamic framework of bone and cartilage called the skeleton. The human skeleton is flexible, with hinges and joints that were made to move. But to cut down harmful frictions, such moving parts must be lubricated.

Man-made machines are lubricated only by outside sources. But the body lubricates itself by manufacturing a jelly-like substance in the right amount at every place it is needed...

The body has a chemical plant far more intricate than any plant that man has ever built. This plant changes the food we eat into living tissue. It causes the growth of flesh, blood, bones and teeth. It even repairs the body when parts are damaged by accident or disease. Power, for work and play, comes from the food we eat.

Even in freezing weather our bodies will sometimes overheat. The body's own cooling system then takes over. Drops of perspiration pour from millions of tiny sweat glands in the skin. This is a major way in which our cooling system keeps our temperature down. The human body has an automatic thermostat that takes care of both our heating and cooling systems, keeping body temperature at about 37°C (98.6°F)."

Dr. Joseph Paturi (9)

Understanding exactly how the body works is a tedious and continuous task. In pursuit of understanding this complex machine, six major fields of study go about conducting research and experiments to find answers to the questions we seek regarding various aspects of the neuromuscular and musculoskeletal networks of the Human Body.(5)

The Six major disciplines can be broken up depending upon what area of muscle research they conduct.

- Neurologists study sensory inputs, feedback loops and their relationship to muscle function.

- Molecular biologists study structural and energetic aspects of muscle contraction at the molecular level.

- Physiologists analyze the properties of muscle motor units.

- Anatomists report on the structural organization of the musculoskeletal system.

- Biomechanists research the kinematics and kinetics of human actions.

- Engineers develop tools for use in all of the above fields of study.

These are just a sample of the fields of study that are attempting to connect exactly how and why the body moves and responds to the manner in which it does.

"From an engineering perspective the human body is one of the most interesting and Challenging "systems" to study and describe."- David Hawkins, PhD (5)

A majority of the structural machinery of the human body generates non-uniform (non-homogeneous structure and/or composition) and non-isotropic (exhibiting different mechanical behavior in different directions). Skeletal muscle falls directly into this category.

Mechanisms of the human structure also have built in adaptive capabilities designed to allow them to induce hypertrophy, hyperplasia, and atrophy to change their material elements and structural properties to adapt to the environmental stresses placed upon them.

The complexity of the human body is compounded by the fact that individual mechanisms act in a synchronized fashion with other mechanisms to manufacture movement. Often times there are multiple synergistic components which act together to achieve an explicit response.

Body actions are the consequence of the body's responses to a multitude of physical and conscious choice factors. These factors are managed by the body's nervous system which administrates responses by stimulating the correct muscles to produce the desired action.

If all of the connections of the neuromuscular and musculoskeletal networks are functioning correctly, then the desired action is realized. When viewed in its entirety, describing human movement is a phenomenal task.

In this perspective, the neuromuscular and musculoskeletal networks consist of three primary levels.

These are:

- The nervous system consisting of both the CNS and peripheral.

- The muscles.
- The bones and connective tissues supporting the body.

Describing the procedures that take place within the body to stabilize it or cause it to mobilize, entails knowledge of several vital concepts. These aspects include:

- The sensory inputs processed
- The interactions linking these inputs
- The structural organization of the musculoskeletal system,
- The body's sensitivity to these inputs
- Along with the management plan used by the body to translate sensory inputs and mentally desired movements into a muscle activation system that will draw out the desired response.

As you can see, the human body is a finely tuned piece of machinery. It is a literal factory of lightning speed reactions between "gears". (5)

"The body's computer system computes and sends throughout the body billions of bits of information, information that controls every action, right down to the flicker of an eyelid. In most computer systems, the information is carried by wires and electronic parts. In the body, nerves are the wires that carry the information back and forth from the central nervous system. And in just one human brain there is probably more wiring, more electrical circuitry, than in all the computer systems of the world put together."- Dr Ratnakant Sanjay, M.D., of Bangalore, India (9)

Non-uniform hypertrophy: The tools of our Trade

"I believe you can change every aspect of a muscle group, including shape, height, contours etc. The only thing you cannot manipulate is your insertion points." - John Parillo

There are several mechanisms within the musculoskeletal makeup that will allow us to go about shaping a muscle.

Targeting different heads or sections of a muscle group - EMG has revealed to us that targeting different heads, through different planes of resistance, within a particular muscle grouping plays a key role in target training.

Creating atmospheres which stimulate activation of different muscle fibers - Not only can we directly target various heads within the muscle, we can also manipulate the effort called upon by that much targeted area by stimulating different muscle fiber types!(11)

Dr. Antonio states, "According to the size principle of motor unit recruitment, the smallest motor units (i.e., slow-twitch or type I) are recruited before the larger motor units (i.e., fast-twitch—type IIa, type IIb) Data derived via glycogen depletion methods show that both fast and slow units are scattered in a heterogeneous manner across a muscle. This would suggest that one could activate a muscle fiber (for instance in a slow motor unit) while an adjacent fast fiber remains inactive."(1)

Lengthening of myofibrils- A muscle is composed of strands of tissue called fascicles. Each fascicle is composed of fasciculi which are bundles of muscle fibers. The muscle fibers are in turn composed of tens of thousands of thread-like myofibrils, which can contract, relax, and elongate. The cytoplasm of the muscle cell is dominated by the presence of numerous longitudinally-oriented myofibrils. Myofibrils extend the length of the cell, anchoring to the plasma membrane at either end. Myofibrils are, in turn, composed of repeating subunits called sarcomeres, each 2-3 microns long. Thus in a myofibril which is about 10 cm long, there are about 40,000 to 50,000 sarcomeres linked end-to-end. Each myofibril is one sarcomere in diameter. Thus a given muscle cell has hundreds to thousands of myofibrils. These myofibrils are kept linked to one another and kept in register by cytoskeletal proteins.

Sarcomeres are composed of two classes of myofilaments, thick and thin, containing actin and myosin respectively. However other proteins (troponins a, b, and c; tropomyosin; alpha-actinin; desmin; vimentin; and others) are also present in the sarcomeres.

Each sarcomere is made of overlapping thick and thin filaments called myofilaments. The thick and thin myofilaments are made up of contractile proteins, primarily actin and myosin. The stretching of a muscle fiber begins with the sarcomere the basic unit of contraction in the muscle fiber. As the sarcomere contracts, the area of overlap between the thick and thin myofilaments increases. As it stretches, this area of overlap decreases, allowing the muscle fiber to lengthen.

When a muscle is stretched, some of its fibers lengthen, but other fibers may remain at rest. The current length of the entire muscle depends upon the number of stretched fibers.

The nerve endings that relay all the information about the musculoskeletal system to the central nervous system are called proprioceptors. Proprioceptors are the source of all proprioception: the perception of one's own body position and movement. The proprioceptors detect any changes in physical displacement (movement or position) and any changes in tension, or force, within the body. They are found in all nerve endings of the joints, muscles, and tendons. The proprioceptors related to stretching are located in the tendons and in the muscle fibers.

There are two kinds of muscle fibers: intrafusal muscle fibers and extrafusal muscle fibers. More specifically, extrafusal fibers contain myofibrils and are what we are commonly referring to when we discuss muscle fibers. (13)

Fascial manipulation- Located all around the muscle and in the fibers are connective tissues. These tissues are composed of a both a base substance and two kinds of protein based fiber known as collagenous connective tissue and elastic connective tissue.

Collagenous connective tissue consists mostly of collagen and supplies tensile strength. Elastic connective tissue consists mostly of elastin and provides elasticity. The base substance is called mucopolysaccharide and performs as both a lubricant (allowing the fibers to easily slide over one another), and as a glue (holding the fibers of the tissue together into bundles). The more elastic connective tissue there is around a joint, the greater the range of motion in that joint. Connective tissues are made up of tendons, ligaments, and the fascial sheaths that envelop, or bind down, muscles into separate groups. These fascial sheaths, or fascia, are named according to where they are located in the muscles:

Organization of Connective Tissue:

- **epimysium**: a connective tissue sheath which encapsulates the entire muscle.
- **Perimysium**: connective tissue partitions which arise from the epimysium and divide the muscle longitudinally into groups of macroscopically visible bundles called fascicles.
- **endomysium**: thin, delicate connective tissue partitions which arise from the perimysium and surround each muscle fiber. Each muscle cell is invested over its entire surface with a glycomatrix-type basal lamina. Collagen fibrils of the endomysium insert into this external lamina, linking the cell to the CT framework.(10)

This can also be related to the Functions of the Connective Tissue

- **neurovascular conduits** Each muscle cell (fiber) is innervated. Muscle cells are also metabolically quite active, thus demanding a rich blood supply. The nerves and blood vessels travel in the CT framework of the

muscle. The major vessels run in the larger connective tissue sheaths. The endomysium blood vessels form a rich capillary bed.

- **mechanical support** The sarcomere is attached to the plasma membrane of the muscle; the plasma membrane is attached to the external lamina; and the external lamina has the connective tissue of endomysium anchored into it. This permits the transmission of force from the sarcomere to the membrane, to the CT, and to the tendon.
- **overstretch protection** The relative inelasticity of the CT framework helps to prevent the muscle from being torn or overstretched. Stretching exercises gradually lengthen the CT component of the muscle. (10)

These connective tissues help provide flexibility to the muscles. Once the muscle fiber has reached its maximum resting length (sarcomeres are completely stretched), additional stretching places force on the surrounding connective tissue. As the tension increases, the collagen fibers in the connective tissue align themselves along the same line of force as the tension. Hence when you stretch, the muscle fiber is pulled out to its full length sarcomere by sarcomere, and then the connective tissue takes up the remaining slack.

This is why fascial stretching works so well, but why it is so realistically painful. You literally have to stretch a fiber to its complete length and then some. (13, 7)

Compartmentalization- "So rather than having a single muscle fiber spanning the entire muscle, it is apparent that each compartment must have its own distinct motor units. Thus, for these muscles to contract smoothly, there has to be cooperation between these different compartments. But also, because each compartment has its own innervation, it is possible that one can selectively recruit a particular region of that muscle." Dr. Antonio (1)

Jacob explains this nicely in the Anatomy Section, "**2.** Wickiewicz, T.L., R.R. Roy, P.L. Powell, and V.R. Edgerton studied the lower body and found that the biceps femorus, the sartorius and semitendinosus muscles are all divided into compartments by 1 or more fibrous bands. Again, we do not see a single fiber from insertion to origin but a muscle divided, as Dr. Antonio puts it, into "compartments (59)." Because of this it is very possible for you as a bodybuilder to recruit a particular section of that muscle!"

Even more evidence that muscle shaping is not only possible, but plausible.

Regional Hypertrophy

The desired end result is clear...Supernatural symmetry in combination with monstrous mass. However, achieving this goal is another matter.

Is there any hope?

Often we hear, "the muscle either contracts or it does not, just do bench presses and you chest will grow, regional hypertrophy is a myth".

If only it were that simple.

Not only is that untrue, but this indoctrination is building an indestructible brick wall of defeat before your very eyes. The more you believe in it, the more bricks you are adding to your own prison.

That sort of mentality is literally robbing the tools of the mind's eye to create a sculptural masterpiece.

For example...

If I were to hand you a lump of marble and say, "Sculpt me your ideal body". Your response would be, "Ok, give me the tools!"

Then I proceeded to hand you a 20lb. sledgehammer.

Your response might be, "Ok, that's a start, where are the rest of the tools?"

I reply, "That's it! Get to work! And I want as much detail as possible!"

No doubt I would get a look of utter confusion. Detail with a sledge hammer? That is exactly what is being proposed when one tells you that hypertrophy is unvarying. They are giving you nothing to work with. No tools to create a body building sculpture that will be etched from the depths of your soul.

Do not compromise with this methodology. Demand an unlimited supply of tools form which to work with. Only you can limit your body building dreams.

Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? - Romans 9:11

Our bodies must subject to our will. They are the clay, we are the sculptor! Will the clay form the sculptor? No.

The sculptor will form the clay; save you let the clay dictate the limit of how far you will create. The out of context use of "All or nothing" is allowing the clay to demand answers from the artist.

For further research in this area, study President Wilson's article, [Physiological Aspects of Bodybuilding Part II](#) and [Is The All Or None Applicable To An Entire Muscle?](#)

Guideline for Muscular Molding

The philosophy of shaping a muscle in retrospect to the ideals of this sport is inherent. But how exactly would one go about this task?

There are multiple ways in which to accomplish this undertaking. But the fundamental principle to shaping a muscle is a utilizing a variety of angles.

In an interview with Jacob Wilson, Trainer of Champions Victor Munoz had this to comment regarding angles, *"I am into a lot of different angles. You see we humans are creatures of habit. We tend to take the same route home everyday. Well I don't (laughing); I like to do everything different. If I was using a certain angle on an exercise for a while I will then completely change its angle to cause new growth. I sometimes will even take my guys to a completely new gym with different equipment for 3 months. Overall change and the constant changing of angles makes a big difference! That's why I get such dramatic results!"*

I couldn't have said it any better! Angles are the literal key to shaping. Electromyography has proven that particular angles will lead to greater electrical activity within particular portions of a muscle group over other parts of the exact same muscle.

This information can definitely be of great assistance in our quest for shape.

Establishing a basic outline for tackling this challenge will better illustrate my point.

Step one:

Analyzation of a body building pose-

I believe this tool to be a vital area of time investment for any body builder. Posing is an art form that requires a lot of attention to details. When you are posing you are literally a walking canvas. As you observe yourself in the mirror you have to see more than your biceps and shoulders. You have to see the "big picture", which are your overall proportion of all your muscle groups and the relative symmetry of your entire body. This can get down to the smallest minute details.

As you pose in the gym concentrate more on observing the muscle you are training. Look for symmetry and lagging areas in the muscle(s). It's a waste of time to showing off in front of others when you are posing in the gym. Spend that valuable "pumped up" time critiquing your development and symmetry. Posing between sets can be very taxing; it strains both the muscular, nervous, and cardiovascular systems hardcore! But the pay off is well worth it!

It can also lead to much greater gains! Hard contraction of the muscles while pumped can cause super hydration in the targeted muscle region.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that a hydrated cell stimulates protein synthesis and inhibits proteolysis (protein breakdown). In this way, muscles are provided with the raw materials to lay down new contractile proteins—the basis for muscle tissue growth.

Unfortunately, during low-repetition training, the time under tension simply isn't sufficient to generate a pump. Consequently, cell volume is relatively constant, and the impetus for protein synthesis is thereby reduced. (11, 6, 7, 12)

It is theorized that lactic acid plays a central role in exercise-related hormonal excitation. Although many people tend think of lactic acid as an impediment to exercise, it is actually a potent anabolic facilitator. Lactic acid is generated as a

byproduct of glycolysis, the energy system that is the primary fuel source used during moderate-repetition training. When lactic acid accumulates in large amounts, there is a corresponding surge in anabolic hormone levels. Conversely, because low-repetition training predominantly relies on the short-term phosphocreatine system for energy—not on glycolysis—only a limited amount of lactic acid is produced. Hence, the secretion of endogenous hormones is somewhat blunted. (7, 12)

As you pose focus on establishing a strong mind-to-muscle connection. Squeezing the muscle and mentally connecting to its essence.

You can not go about shaping a muscle until you've decided where the challenge lies. I am a firm believer in the use of competition poses to discover areas that need improvement or are out of proportion with other areas. Competition poses are designed to expose all the major muscle groups from a variety of viewpoints and reveal the symmetry (or lack of) between them.

For example, let's say that I was performing a triceps routine, and was practicing the "Side Triceps Pose".

As I was analyzing my triceps in this pose, I came to the conclusion that I needed more separation and shape between my biceps and my triceps. By doing so, I could make my arms appear much larger and comparative to one another, resulting in a side tricep pose that would look much more ominous.

Step Two:

Locate the anatomical target-

After you have analyzed a particular pose, and discovered an area that needs shaping, it's important to specifically locate the area with an anatomical name.

Doing so will help much better establish step three and four in selecting particular exercises.

Following this same example, I had concluded that my focus should be on the Lateral Head of my triceps brachii.

You can research our anatomical illustrations in the "*Anatomy section*" of the site.

Step Three:

Analyze the Muscle Fiber ratio-

Finding the fiber ratio for the target area can better help create an atmosphere of hypertrophy once we start selecting exercises at which to work with.

When critiquing for muscle fiber ratios, refer to the amazing new installment at ABC, "[Muscle Fiber Ratios For Each Body part!](#) -" located in the Anatomy Section.

The Lateral Head of the tricep brachii reveals the following ratios:

32.5% slow twitch and 67.5% Type II Fast twitch for the tricep region.

From there use the charts in the article, [Muscle Fibers Part Two](#) to begin analyzing the optimal rep ranges for the goal region.

The Lateral Head of the tricep is composed of a majority of Type II Fast Twitch fibers, which responds well to time under tension in the 6 to 15 repetition range. Furthermore, the best stimulus is achieved more specifically between 9 to 12 repetitions.

This would be the focus target repetition range during this prioritization phase. Also available for use is the "stop watch method", described here in the [Count To 60 seconds And Grow Man Grow!!!!](#) article. In this case our target range would best be met in the 46-60 second time range.

Step Four:

Create a battle Plan!

Now that we have established the point of attack, we need to mount the assault.

The next step would be prioritizing the targeted area with a wide variety of exercises that stimulate the targeted muscle. The "exercise section" is chalk full of scores of great exercises at your disposal. This "exercise section" is located in the blue tabs at the top of the main index page.

In the case of the lateral tricep brachii, the lateral and medial heads of the triceps are stressed hardest by press-downs and kickback movements.

Angles, angles, angles are the name of the game from this point on. In this instance a great combat plan would be to target the lateral area with a wide array of assorted kick back and press down exercises.

In the future we are going to create a detailed plan of exactly what exercises stimulate what heads of each muscle group the best!

Press downs would be the primary focus of shaping the lateral heads. Using Magnetic Resonance imaging, Dr. Per Tesch conducted studies on the triceps using several exercises including various bars, grips and benches, as well as cables and a parallel dip station. The results showed a very slight change in angle or grip can have an entirely different effect on the targeted muscle!

From this point there are several plans of attack at our disposal.

Strategy one-

Don't do the same exercise twice! Target the tricep with as many angles as possible. Even if you perform four sets of push downs, don't hold the bar in the same spot twice! Take careful note of your hand positioning. With every successive set vary your grip slightly.

Another variation of this is to simply select a different exercise for each set you do. In other words each exercise would consist of one set. So if you performed nine sets in your workout, you would do nine different exercises.

Strategy two-

Target the area twice per week and with more volume!

A more frequent and higher volume workout can lead to greater mitochondrial density and greater hormone release! This concept also backed up by the Law of Specificity. Jacob covers this in more detail in [Cliff Hanger Part I](#).

I have already demonstrated how significant a pump is for growth. But higher volume also leads to increased anabolic hormones in the body that will be used for repair and growth where needed most! If your lateral triceps head is prioritized and forced to increase its work load, it will demand more restoration powers!

After a muscle has been subjected to intense stress, the secretion of endogenous hormones occurs. These hormones help to instigate the growth process. As a rule, the greater the amount of circulating anabolic hormones, the greater the potential for increases in muscular hypertrophy. (11)

Strategy Three-

Shock the muscle into shape!

Extended Peak Contraction: The chisel of muscle shape manipulation

I am an avid believer in static contraction for shaping a muscle. This technique is literally the chisel that chips away at our biological stature.

A static contraction occurs when tension develops, but there is no observed shortening or lengthening of the muscle. Tension is generated in the muscle, but the muscle does not shorten. Isometric means literally "no change in length" and because limb movement does not occur it can also be referred to as static exercise. This type of exercise does not cause much of an increase in oxygen uptake because the high forces generated in the muscle prevent blood from entering or leaving the tissue.

Some various methods of the static theme can be used for shaping a muscle.

1. **Basic static contraction at the end of a set.** Read more about this concept in a previous issue of HYPERplasia magazine, [Use Static Contraction To Make Your Biceps Peak Higher, Shoulders Widen and Quads Separate!](#) Of course, "basic" is a deceiving word to use, because the methods described in that article are down right barbaric.

2. **The Static strip method.** If I ever compose a dictionary, I'm going to include a picture of a body builder doing a static strip set next to the definition of *Torture*. Jacob covers this inhuman theme in [Static Strips and Opposite Body part Supersetting](#) .

3. **Static Super Sets.** This technique will give the kind of burn that will take you to the threshold of your pain tolerance! You can read more about this static stun in [How To Shock Your Body Out Of The Comfort Zone Part One](#)

4. **Static Over Load.** I introduced this shock technique in the "8 Weeks to Bull Sized Traps and Neck" workout, and it is without a doubt highly effective for molding a muscle.

To implement this method, begin by pumping the desired region with a higher number or repetitions. I prefer a range of 10-15. Work on strong contractions with each rep as to achieve a solid mind-muscle link and blood pump.

Immediately upon fatigue, select a much heavier weight, hoist it up to its "peaked" position and hold until static failure. This is much easier said than done!

I prefer cables or cable machines for this method for two reasons. The first is the constant tension provided by the pulley apparatus. The second is you will probably

have to cheat the weight to hoist it after the higher rep failure. Cheating with cables is much safer and faster.

However you can use free weights as well. As the example I gave in the trap workout lays out.

Using our same example, perform one-handed cable press downs to failure for 15 reps.

Once a strong pump has been achieved, significantly increase the weight and cheat the weight to a peak contracted position, using both momentum and your "free" arm to do so.

Hold the static contraction to failure. This static overload system works like a charm in profiling the most stubborn of areas!

4. Static Range Strain. As you workout with a specific exercise, watch in the mirror and observe where the preferred area you want to shape is exerted hardest. For example, if I was working on shaping the lateral head of my tricep for the sake of my "Most Muscular" pose, I might be more concerned about the half way point of the muscles full contraction.

In this instance the following technique could help pronounce that area of pose.

I also believe that Compartmentalization is the key reason this shock works so well.

Take the exercise to failure and proceed to hold that particular position with as much stress resistance as you possibly can.

Let's take tricep cable press downs in this example. Work through a typical set to failure. Upon exhaustion, hold the weight statically, at the position of the movement that tenses and strains the area you are looking to shape the hardest.

5. Drop-Level Static Negatives. I covered this concept extensively in [How To Shock Your Body Out Of The Comfort Zone Part Two](#) .If you have been struggling with shaping a particular area of your physique then drop-level static negatives are going to be your salvation!

6. Rest-pause static. This is a technique that simply allows you to take any of the above principles to a new level. Taking the "static overload method", for example, I could go to static overload failure, rest-pause 10-30 seconds and perform another static overload.

If you want unnatural shape, be prepared to do unnatural things! That is an underlying rule for body building, in regards to all aspects of the sport!

Strategy Four-

Combine the first two strategies!!!!

1. *Don't do the same exercise twice!*
2. *Target the area twice per week and with more volume!*

This strategy is only for the insanely dedicated to abnormal proportions.

Step Five:

Fascial Stretching-

Shape and Separation go hand in hand. Fascial stretching literally pulls the muscles apart, creating a new dimension of outline around the besieged muscle. Forcing expansion in the connective tissues surrounding a muscle girdle will add the much needed room for shaping and molding. This is a deadly force in the muscle sculpting equation. President Wilson goes into vivid detail regarding manipulation of this invaluable technique to form eerie separation in his article, [Can You Use The Muscle Memory Phenomenon, Without Ever Having The Muscle!?](#)

Step Six:

Pose Down-

Last but not least is the pose down! I recommend posing between all sets and more concentrated posing sessions after your workouts. Between sets concentrate on the pose that you are working to shape the muscle for. After your workout, stretch and pose, stretch and pose, stretch and pose!

Posing has the ability to increase the body's nervous system adaptation capacity.

As you pose and flex the nervous system calls motor units into action causing the intense contraction of the muscle. The incredible part is that the nervous system has the capability to increase Code Rating! In other words, increasing the rate that electrical impulses are sent to the muscle! This is distinct adaptation that will intensify more and more as practice time is put into posing! Study more about this in [The Theorem of Repeated Efforts](#) .

Posing will also increase motor unit recruitment, calling more muscle fibers into action as you flex.

"Like Clay in Your Hands..."

Sculpture is an art form that is three-dimensional. Using the mind's eye to visualize your muscular shaping, along the contours of your desire, will literally turn your body into clay at a potter's wheel. Visualizing yourself as you desire to be in your mind's eye is a clear step in the right direction...

"These are the same techniques that have been used for years by runners, football players and other athletes to keep them selves going when they've reached the level of their endurance, "I knew a runner who ran marathons by imagining herself as a steam engine that was pushing further and further uphill." said Bonnie Baker, a clinical nurse specialist in surgical oncology at the Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Research Institute. (8)

What exactly is the mind's eye? Using magnetic fields that disrupt brain activity, researchers have proved that visual memories are re-created in the brain as mental pictures. Stored images are played, like videotapes, on a screen like sheet of tissue at the back of the head.

Brain scans previously revealed intense activity in this area of the brain when people recall a familiar object, scene, or letter. Using magnetic currents to blur the "mind's-eye" screen, Harvard researchers have found they can delay visual imagination, strong evidence that memories of what the eye once saw are replayed in this little theater of the brain.

Scenes that register on the retina of the eye are faithfully projected by patterns of nerve signals activated in the visual area of the brain," explains Stephen Kosslyn, professor of psychology. "The images are then stored in the temporal lobes (under the temples) in a compressed form not unlike magnetic pulses on a videotape.

In 1993, Kosslyn and his colleagues showed that two small areas at the middle of the back of the brain become active when you close your eyes and visualize letters of the alphabet. A few years later, he found that smaller objects activate areas farther back in the visual cortex than larger ones. Much the same thing happens when we first view objects of different sizes. (3)

Visualization is being tried with greater frequency and many studies have documented its impact on health and success in athletes.

This tactic has been used for decades by body builders. Tom Platz would compare his bicep peaks to mountains that he could literally form in his mind! Arnold referred to himself as a sculptor who would shape his body until it was as he described, "in perfect proportion."

No doubt using the mind's eye is an essential tool to help shape the muscle.

Any effort always starts with a desire to accomplish a goal set forth in your mind. Use this to your advantage as you fulfill your quest to build the ultimate sculpture!

Yours in Sport,

Old School.

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