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BATTLE OF THE 202'S

THE OLYMPIA ANABOLIC STACK

MR. O TOP 10 PREVIEW!

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THE WORLD'S BIGGEST BODYBUILDING MAGAZINE!

Volume 46, Number 10, October 2009

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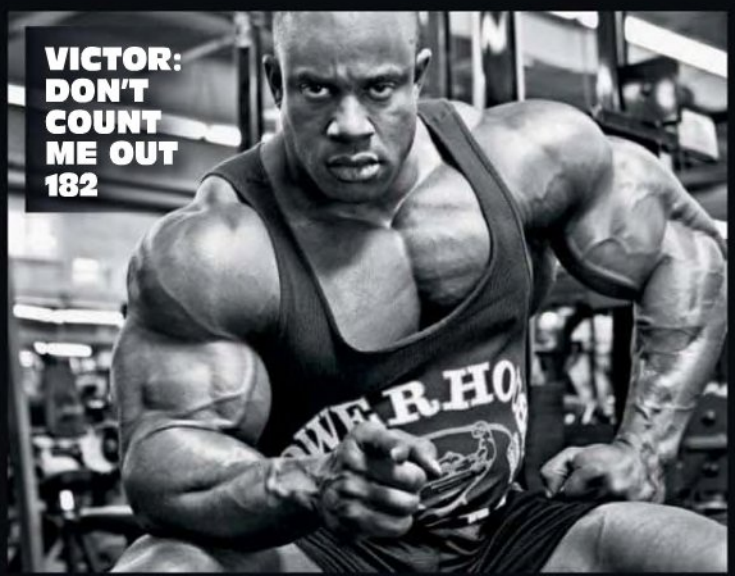
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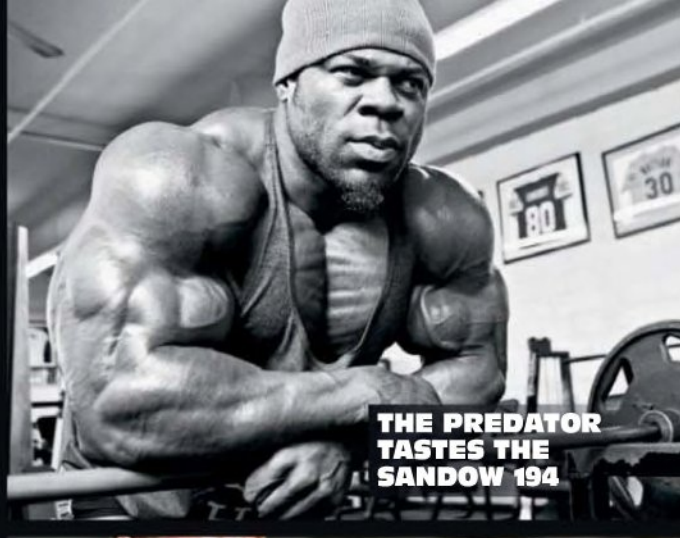
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editor's letter

By Steve Blechman *Publisher & Editor-in-Chief*

OLYMPIA SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

AND THE WINNER IS...

Have we got a lineup for you. A heartbeat away from the Olympia, and the battle about to rage will be an event *the likes of which have never been seen before in the history of bodybuilding.* For the first time ever, we legitimately have at least five men who are all *equally* capable of winning the title this year. History is about to be made, bros— this is one we'll be talking about for *years* to come!

We start this special edition of MD with the 'true victor' on our cover, Victor Martinez. Is victory finally within reach? After the unthinkable tragedy he and his family suffered in the loss of his eldest sister Eridania 'Iris' Rodriguez, Martinez plans to gather his courage and move toward his goal, with more determination than ever before— as his sister would have wanted. "I know she's watching my every move now, wherever she is. I owe it to Iris to train and diet as hard as I can and be the best I can possibly be."

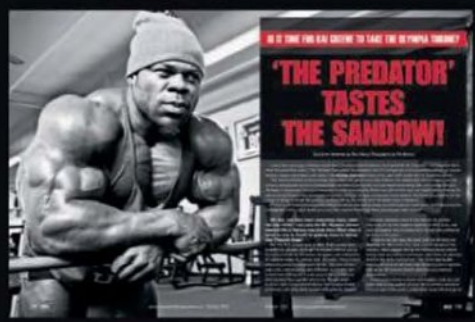
Iris was Victor's biggest fan, and cooked all his meals. In honor of his sister, Victor Martinez is on a mission; in "Don't Count Me Out!" beginning on page 182, he tells the story from *his* point of view. We at MD know that although our brother Victor is no stranger to tragedy; we also know he is truly a phoenix, rising from the ashes— and that he will stay strong and triumph, as he has done in the past.

Flex Wheeler critiques physiques in this 'Year of the Question Mark' in "The 2009 Mr. Olympia— How Will It Go Down?" on page 158. He gives us the top 10 contenders to the title— as well as all the reasons they stand the chance to walk with the Sandow. With









Dexter Jackson, **Jay Cutler**, **Kai Greene**, **Victor**, **Dennis Wolf**, **Phil Heath**, **Branch Warren**, **Toney Freeman**, **Melvin Anthony**, and **Silvio Samuel** all hungrier than ever before, this will NOT be a show to gamble good money on! The competition will be ferocious; the bodies will be grainy-hard and **huge**; and out of the best bodybuilders in the **world**, only one will achieve the top title in our sport!

Has **Dexter Jackson** reached his pinnacle? Last year was Dexter's year— and after his third Arnold Classic win, three more wins in Australia, New Zealand and Romania, and then his triumph at the Mr. Olympia— what can we expect this year from 'The Blade'? In "Dexter Jackson: 1-Hit Wonder?" on page 170, Flex Wheeler brings us from the amateur, bantamweight years, up through the years of outrageous growth that marked Dexter's progression through the weight classes. Read about his transformation from a 137-pound novice into the greatest bodybuilder in the world.

Is it time for Kai to take the throne? Just a few years ago, no one would have considered **Kai Greene** to be a potential Mr. Olympia— but over the past three years, he has willed his physique into an increasingly more powerful package of muscle density, shape, separation, and freaky detail, and blown all expectations out of the water with his unparalleled posing routine and artful approach to the presentation of that incredible machine he calls his body. Kai Greene, philosopher and true master of the art of bodybuilding, goes deeper than ever before in his exclusive interview with Ron Harris in, "The Predator Tastes the Sandow!" on page 194.

Is this the year **Dennis Wolf** fulfills his destiny? The Big Bad Wolf is **enormous**. He is tipping the scales these days at 311— the most he's ever been— and that's a *lot* of mass! Last year, at five weeks out from the Olympia and 285 pounds, Dennis looked untouchable; then, two weeks out from the Olympia, a low-carb diet ate up 15 pounds of muscle and he looked *flat* at the contest. Read "The Redemption of the Big Bad Wolf," on page 206, to find out why *this year*, Dennis feels very confident about taking home that Sandow!

It's been three whole years— is that why **Branch Warren** is hungrier than ever for the Olympia stage? After last year's freak accident, tearing his triceps while tripping on his staircase at home, Branch was forced to miss the '08 show. Now he is ripped to the bone, with loads of thick, gnarly muscle— and he is not to be deterred in his quest! In "Hunting for Victory: Branch Warren is Tracking His Next Win!" on page 222, Ron Harris gives us his exclusive interview with Warren— it's not to be missed!

How will **Iris Kyle** top her former triumphs? Iris won both the Ms. International *and* the Ms. Olympia— three years in a row. She's already won this year's Arnold. In short— Iris Kyle has dominated women's bodybuilding for the past five years. And she's a true champion, never satisfied with the status quo, always striving to improve her structure. Read "The Art of the Physique: The Style of Iris Kyle," beginning on page 244, by Cheri Owen, for the inside story on the *real* Iris, as she prepares to defend her Ms. Olympia crown. And don't miss Women's Bodybuilding this month, also by Cheri, for the Ms. Olympia 2009 lineup in, "Anxious for Vegas," on page 320.









Oscar Ardon debuts "The Bodybuilding Alchemist" this month on page 284. Webster defines alchemy as: *a power or process of transforming something common into something special.* Oscar's intense passion for bodybuilding began in his teenage years; it led to his becoming a motivational trainer, in a class all his own. Oscar worked his alchemical magic with **Kai Greene**, **Evan Centopani** and **Kevin English**, to name a few. We're proud to have him on team MD; be sure to check it out!

The rest of this commemorative issue is jam-packed with all the latest news, views and cutting-edge science on pharmaceutical enhancement, nutrient timing, mass-gaining and muscle development— together with **the *baddest*** Olympia lineup the world of bodybuilding has *ever* seen. See you next month! ■

Cover photos of Victor Martinez and Iris Kyle are by Per Bernal

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Kudos From Down Under

I absolutely dig Muscular Development. Three months ago, I subscribed to MD and every month I eagerly await the next edition. I hassle my mailman for it (just kidding). In the past I have never been much of a reader, but I read your mag from cover to cover, front to back—every month. The fact that you cover all aspects of bodybuilding, training and diet in almost encyclopedia-like fashion is amazing, and the photography is incredible. Every shot of pros such as Kai Greene, Victor Martinez, Lee Priest and others is captured in impeccable detail. I used to manage a supplement store, and it's good to keep up with the latest supplement releases and news. Keep up the good work! Keep those MD mags comin'!!!

Joel Ninkie
Sydney, Australia



Dan the Man

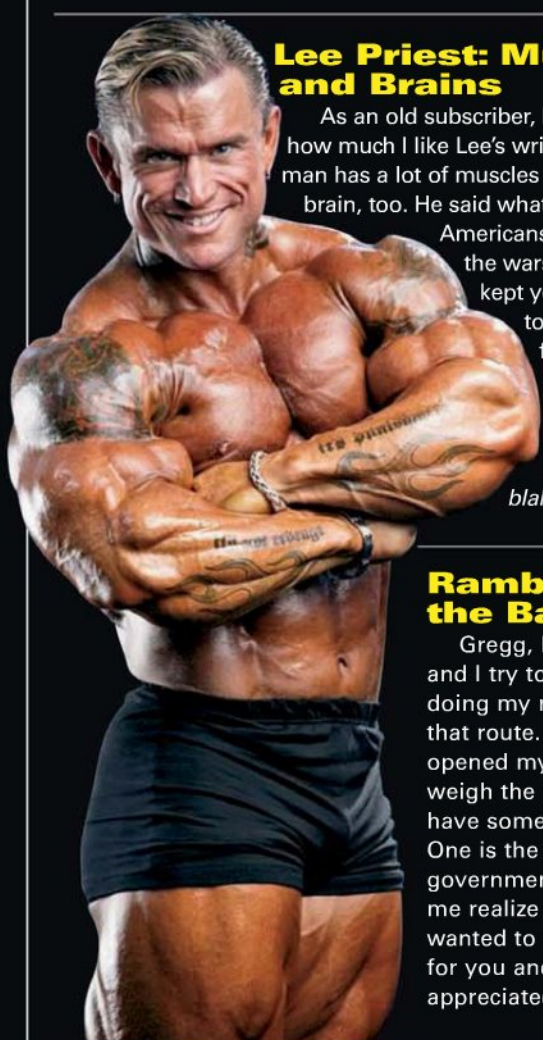
I thoroughly enjoyed Dan Gwartney's 'Testosterone' column ["The Best and Worst Foods for Altering Testosterone,' August 2009]. Very, very informative and well-written. I was able to take many nuggets of information from that article. Thanks, Dan! Keep 'em coming!

Cristy, e-mail

Way to Go, Evan!

Congratulations to Evan Centopani for his debut win in New York. He was a thoroughbred among Clydesdales.

Tony Cassese, e-mail



Lee Priest: Muscles and Brains

As an old subscriber, I want to say how much I like Lee's writing. This man has a lot of muscles and a lot of brain, too. He said what most Americans think about the wars we are in. I kept your last issue to show to my friends where the truth is—not on TV…*blah, blah, blah.* Great choice you made in taking him onboard.



Max Rossler, e-mail

Ramblin Freak: the Good, the Bad and the Ballsy

Gregg, I read your column every month in MD. I am an aspiring bodybuilder and I try to learn all I can. I am 26 and have never used steroids, but I had been doing my research, trying to learn as much about them as possible before I went that route. I just want to thank you for your article [Ramblin Freak, June 2009]. It opened my eyes to the bad things that can happen, and how the risk doesn't outweigh the reward. You give a straight opinion, and I appreciate it. It's good to have someone telling the truth on issues. You only see two sides to drug usage. One is the glamorous side where everything looks great, and the other is the government 'blown out of proportion' side. Your story opened my eyes and made me realize I have too much to lose by opening a Pandora's box. Once again, I just wanted to thank you for your straight information. I hope everything works out for you and I can't wait for your next column. What you wrote takes balls and is appreciated.

Brad McCracken, e-mail

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

SHAWN RAY'S Industry InsiderBuzz

By Shawn Ray





As the 44th Mr. Olympia contest approaches, **Dexter Jackson,** the 12th champion in Mr. Olympia history, prepares to defend his title. Things are heating up, as we head toward a massive showdown on September 24th & 25th in Las Vegas! Former Two-Time Mr. Olympia **Jay Cutler** is looking to settle a score with Dexter, while Not be outdone, **Kai Greene** is making his Mr. Olympia debut as the reigning 2009 Arnold Classic Champion with guns blazing! Several notables in the industry have reminded me not to take my eyes off **Dennis Wolf**, as he has made some considerable improvements that are rumored to be nothing short of amazing! All of the above, plus athletes like **Toney Freeman**, **Melvin Anthony**, **Dennis James**, **Hidetada Yamagishi**, **Gustavo Badell**, **Silvio Samuel** and more, makes for an interesting contest for sure!

The latest athlete to announce he will be competing in the September 'shoot-out' is 'German Giant,' **Markus Ruhl**! After announcing the New York Pro was his last contest, it seems Markus may actually have begun to believe in his abilities, after beating back a standout like Silvio Samuel, who placed 7th the last two years in the Olympia. Markus feels that he may be the one to join the ranks of the Top 6, but time will tell...! Tickets are still available at rchang@weiderpub.com.



I don't want to proceed without first recognizing that this will be the first Mr. Olympia in my 22 years of participating in this event, whether it was competing onstage, Master of Ceremonies or covering it for the magazine, that Ben Weider will not be on hand to declare the contest 'open' for competition. Ben Weider died, at 85 years of age, just weeks after the 2008 Mr. Olympia— but on Olympia Weekend, he was upbeat and jovial, as he perused the Olympia EXPO meeting the fans and vendors, shaking hands with the athletes and such that none of us expected it would be the last time we'd see him in all his glory, doing what he loved to do which was promoting and supporting the sport of bodybuilding! His presence will be sorely missed, but with and through the Olympia Weekend, his life's work will live on! Thank you, Ben Weider, for all that you did for the sport— and continue to do through your legacy.



By the time you receive this Mr. Olympia edition of MD, we will have had six more pros join the IFBB, following the aftermath of the NPC USA Championships, held in July from Men & Women's Bodybuilding, Figure and Bikini Classes. While I have never been one to make predictions, I will go out on a limb and say the 2008 Heavyweight Nationals 1st runner-up, **Mark Alvisi,** will land in the IFBB— and possibly last year's 1st runner-up in the USA light-heavyweight class, **Branden Ray,** will graduate!



It seems the **Serge Nubret** saga continues on, with no real answers from the people who are closest to him. It is my understanding that both Arnold and Franco have been notified that Serge is in dire straights and that his immediate family could be the perpetrators of his worsening condition. While Serge has had a visitor or two stop in on him at the hospital in France, word on the street is that the hospital he is held up in is less than desirable and that there may be a 'conspiracy' to keep him isolated and away from outsiders, who would like him taken off all medication immediately! This is an ongoing saga, with very sketchy details. However, Serge Nubret's condition has been confirmed to be serious, and the local authorities have been notified. Will keep you posted.



The new NPC Bikini contests are generating speed and interest from the competitors, as scores of them have signed up to compete in upwards of

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL and BILL COMSTOCK

NEW COLUMN!

five classes per show, to hopefully be on the receiving end of an IFBB pro card, which they will be able to use in 2010! The latest big hit was **Marzia Prince,** who won her class and Overall at the Jr. Nationals this past June. There are sure to be a slew of other names added as of this writing, once the dust settles in Vegas from the USA Championships.

What do you get when you throw these guys listed here together in front of a camera: Sly Stallone, Dolph Lundgren, Steve Austin, Randy Couture, Eric Roberts, Jet Lee, Jason Statham, Terry Crews, Mickey Rourke and Arnold Schwarzenegger? You have the makings of a block-buster movie of EPIC proportions called "The Expendables." This movie was written and directed by Sylvester Stallone and will be out April 23rd of 2010! Why write about it now? Because there was a special request made by a few of the actors for some issues of the magazine while they were filming on location but also when you watch the movie you're going to see a copy of Muscular Development prominently displayed in the movie— and there is no doubt that the personnel on this movie set reads and follows many of the basic principles our athletes share with the readers!

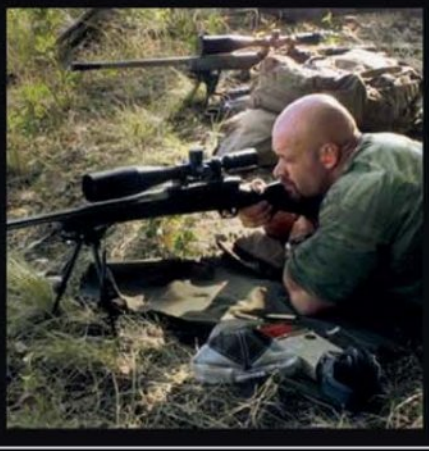
The plot of this movie is: a team of mercenaries head to South America on a mission to overthrow a dictator. This will be one of those 'DON'T-MISS MOVIES' of the year— and I'll preview it for you right here when the movie drops next year!



Back to bodybuilding. It seems there is a raging debate about "Who is the Greatest Bodybuilder Under 202 pounds?" Arguably for the moment, that title is firmly secure in Tucson, Arizona— but many feel it is being held temporarily in the hands of **David Henry** with an "unsteady grip." Those making the most noise are guys like; **James "Flex" Lewis**, **Kevin English**, **Mark Dugdale**, **Eduardo Correa** and most recently, 'rookie pro' **Peter Putnam**!

It seems everyone wants a piece of "King" David Henry at this year's Mr. Olympia showdown. While as of this writing, the results of the Dexter Jackson Pro, PBW Tampa Pro and Europa Pro have yet be turned in, it is likely to be said that there could be a few 'dark horses' that may emerge from some or all three of these contests! As for the greatest bodybuilder less than 202 pounds, I think Three-Time Mr. Olympia **Frank Zane**, Hall of Fame bodybuilder, **Lee Labrada** and the late **Momo Benaziza** might have something to say about it— but one thing is for sure, the dust from the current crop of guys will soon settle and there will be only One Man Standing in the end come this Olympia Weekend— but for now, King David Henry sits high upon his throne, looking for a battle!

In case you have been hiding under a rock as of late, you will have noticed that MD's very own **Branch Warren** has become more like a 'Renaissance Man' of sorts lately. This dude is out hunting wild boar, filming a new 'Reality TV' series, promoting the NPC Branch Warren Classic, training for the Mr. Olympia on the heels of his third Most Muscular Award from the Arnold Classic— all while running his own mailing/distribution company out in Texas and enjoying the fruits of his labor as husband to IFBB Figure Pro/Wife, **Trish Warren**. Some guys have all the luck! Branch will be looking to settle a few scores in Las Vegas come the Olympia Weekend now that he has sold his personal training business and has time to focus on the important things in life.



Has anyone noticed how 'jacked' **Flex Wheeler** has been looking lately? My co-host on MD Radio seems to be training with and helping some up-and-coming bodybuilders, while sporting a 'swole-tight' hard-body himself. He had been training with a few guys this summer, helping them get ready for the Masters Nationals and the USA— but you'd think by the way Flex looks, he was planning a comeback at the Olympia this year? Things that make you go, Hhhmmmm…?

I have been informed by a reliable source that there will be no Women's Press Conference at the Olympia this year. It seems many of the women need more time to prepare themselves for the Press Conference than the men— something there is little of during this hectic weekend of events. The men tend to field the lion's share of the questions effectively, leaving the women up there as 'window dressing.' I personally feel this is a good idea— however, they could have accommodated fans of both sides had they simply held the Women's Press Conference an hour before the men for all who were interested.

This was put to the woman for vote and met with little to no resistance in that the men pretty much carry the weekend's events and sub-plot storylines. That said, I would not dismiss rookie female pro **Isabelle Turell** from Terra Haute, Indiana, our last year's NPC Ms. USA Champion, in her first appearance on the Olympia stage to make a **big** impact! Her lines are what women's bodybuilding is all about and her shape… *forgetaboutit!* Not to be outdone, defending multi-winner of the Ms. Olympia, **Iris Kyle** will no doubt leave no stone unturned in her efforts to defend and retain her four previous Ms. Olympia Titles! Good luck, ladies.





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Shawn Ray's— IndustryInsiderBuzz

On October 17th & 18th, the Italian IFBB President and IFBB pro pujdge, Betto Mondello is staging the IFBB Women's Fitness, Body fitness and Bodybuilding World Championships and he is largely responsible for the huge economic push for the Women's World Championships to even take place. Plus the IFBB "Notte dei Campioni" Arnold Classic Amateur Qualification Contest promoted by Rossella Pruneti and her husband, Dennis Giusto will be will be taking place during the weekend events. They will also have a Men's Wheelchair and Men's Fitness Competitions with IFBB pros, **Kai Greene**, **Victor Martinez** and I there to support the event, as well as perform a pro seminar for the Italian contingency in attendance. It's a huge event for the IFBB and the Italians, the venue is breathtaking and being held at: Villa Erba in Cernobbio, Como, Italy. Check it out online at: www.villaeba.it.

It has been 'officially' confirmed that eight-time Mr. Olympia **Ronnie Coleman** will forego competition plans for 2009 season and opt for a possible return to center stage in 2010! Ronnie is one of, if not *the* 'Greatest Bodybuilder of All Time' and has returned to his roots at Metroflex Gym in Arlington, Texas with hopes of regaining his former glory possibly one last time next year.

'The Denver Nugget' **Phil Heath** has beaten everyone to the punch by releasing the 1st ever bodybuilding DVD in 'Blu Ray' format entitled: "The Gift: UnWrapped," also available in regular DVD format. Phil is currently using Hany Rambod's FST-7 Training and the DVD shows Phil at his best combined with lifestyle, posing, training and more footage of a man who would be King! The new DVD is available at: www.PhillipHeath.com.

I have joined GENr8, Inc., the exclusive marketers of Vitargo® S2. I'll be a Chief Consultant and Strategist to GENr8 in the areas of marketing and promotions related to bodybuilding and its athletes, both professional and amateur, creating opportunities for charity events, as well as muscle camps, pro bodybuilding competition, and sponsorship opportunities.

I'll be working directly with GENr8 President and CEO, Anthony L. Almada, B.Sc., M.Sc., a nutritional and exercise biochemist and was the co-founder and past-president of EAS. Anthony's 'Shred of Evidence' column appears each month in MD.

For more information, visit www.genr8speed.com.

Forty-two-year-old former Mr. USA Champion and this year's IFBB Orlando Pro winner, **Troy Alves** of Phoenix, will have more than just the Olympia contest to celebrate; come the weekend of September 24th 25th it is also his birthday! His wish? A Top 10 finish in the Mr. Olympia— which means someone is going to get knocked out of or prevented from making the Top 10! Why doesn't he just come out and say he wants **Melvin Anthony** or **Silvio Samuel** in a box, wrapped nicely and tossed to the side of the stage during the finals and be done with it! Happy 43rd birthday, old man!

Until next time, Stay Hungry! Shawn ■

Our prayers go out to MD's very own **Victor Martinez**, whose sister, Eridania Rodriguez was tragically murdered last July in New York City while working at her job— leaving behind a family who loved her. An education fund has been established for her youngest daughter, Yaniris, called **The Yaniris Figueroa Tragedy Fund.** Donations can be mailed to:

The Yaniris Figueroa Tragedy Fund
P.O. Box 268
Carthage, TX 75633

Donations can also be made directly through your bank as a wire transfer:
Routing number: 111923607
Account number: 5984602

Everyone at Muscular Development sends our condolences to Victor and his family.

By TEAM MD

MD People

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JULY 18, 2009

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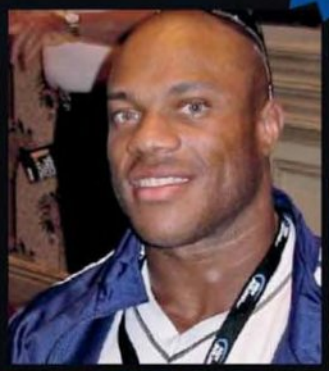


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THE GOSPEL AccordingtoLEE

By Lee Priest



Disclaimer:
He's got an opinion— actually a lot of opinions— and he's not afraid to express them. Being politically correct is not how Lee Priest rolls, so if you are easily offended, you may want to flip a couple pages!

A Sweet Birthday Gift



For my 37th birthday in July, my mum got me a present I truly love. Years ago I had a white staffie named Lois (after Lois Lane, of course) who was totally deaf. As it turned out, she had to be put to sleep and it happened on my birthday. Mum saw another white staffie, also deaf, listed in the newspaper, as 'pet of the week' up for adoption. She said to herself, "Well, this was clearly something that was meant to be." That very day, the newest member of my family was here with us and we named him Nitro.

Elderly Drivers— More of a Menace Than Drunk Text-messagers?

Lately there have been efforts to introduce legislation to force elderly drivers to take vision and road tests to renew their licenses every few years after a certain age in states that don't have such laws in place. Right now, 26 U.S. states have these requirements for senior drivers. MD's Ron Harris sent me a news story about how they are now hustling to put similar laws in effect in his native Massachusetts, after a 4-year-old girl was killed in a crosswalk by an 88-year-old female motorist. He figured that since I race cars, I would probably have something to say on this subject.

We can't really get too upset about the elderly, as one day we will all get old if we live long enough. And who among us would want to give up driving? I've always said that after a certain age, probably 70 or 75, we need to re-test drivers every couple years. Their hand-eye coordination goes down along with their vision and hearing, and of course the mind often starts to go in general. I can sympathize— I'm still not even 40 and I know my brain is already slipping away!

Old people can make mistakes that a younger driver would have to be drunk or high to do, like hitting the gas instead of the brake, driving too slow, pulling out without looking, etc. Sure they have the right to be on the road, but that doesn't mean they should be putting others in danger. Maybe they could even make it so they are limited to smaller cars with no more than a 4-cylinder engine. A little car plowing into a crowd does a lot less damage than a big 8-cyclinder Buick or Cadillac! But generally speaking, the very young and the very old are going to cause a lot more accidents than everybody else.

Acetaminophen: Liver Wrecker!

One of the biggest scare tactics brought up whenever steroids are mentioned in the media is how they will destroy your liver, despite a lack of cases to support it. Never mind that alcohol blows out hundreds of thousands of livers every year and any fool over the age of 21 can rot his liver into black slime by plunking down his or her cash at the corner liquor store. But now the FDA has finally turned its attention to something that's been fucking up American livers for years: the pain reliever acetaminophen, which is the active ingredient in Tylenol, Excedrin, and Nyquil Cold and Flu, and is also found in the prescription drugs Percocet and Vicodin.

A recent FDA memo reported that an estimated 110,000 emergency room visits every year are related to acetaminophen, with hundreds more cases of acute liver failure. Ronald Busettil, chairman of surgery and chief of liver transplantation at UCLA Medical Center, said that acetaminophen is the number-one reason people need liver transplants for acute liver failure. A big factor in all this is that people are unaware of just how many medications contain acetaminophen, and toxic doses can easily build up, without the patient having any idea.

Wow, this is a real shocker— not! It should anger Americans that it took this long for the FDA to *finally* do something about a problem they must have been aware of for a very long time! But the pharmaceutical companies and health insurance companies are gigantic corporations with enormous influence in government. So what if your liver gets trashed? Then they can just sell you some other drug to manage that problem!

The makers of Tylenol, Johnson & Johnson, are saying it's the consumer's responsibility to read all the labels and keep track of how much of this drug they are taking. Anything over 4,000 milligrams a day can be toxic to your liver. That's funny, remember ephedra? The only people who had health problems with that were the ones taking excessive doses, yet that highly effective fat-loss drug was yanked right off the market faster than you can say "Apparently they didn't have any wealthy lobbyists in Washington to make sure the right people got wined, dined, and laid."

The case could very easily be made that any product containing acetaminophen should be available only with a prescription, but that won't happen, because it would

mean huge profit losses. I know I bring up tobacco all the time, but again, here's a product that's highly addictive and kills hundreds of thousands of Americans every year. So why the hell is it allowed to be sold again? Oh yeah, that's right— big money! America calls itself the land of the free and the home of the brave, but they let their governments literally get away with murder.

Look at countries like France or China, or most recently Iran. The people there stand up to their governments. They take to the streets and protest over injustice and it often leads to change. Americans simply bitch and moan and go back to their 800 channels of digital cable on their big-screen plasma TVs. So don't be surprised if there are other things out there killing you that your government is fully aware of, but isn't doing a damn thing about.

Farrah, Ed, and Michael: Death *Does* Come in Threes!



What a week we had in late June! Farrah Fawcett, Ed McMahon, and then Michael Jackson all died within days of each other. Farrah and Ed were stars in their own right, but their deaths weren't much of a surprise. Farrah had been very sick with cancer for years and Ed was no spring chicken.

Michael was one of the biggest celebrities of the last 40 years, and he died relatively young and with no warning whatsoever. I think his death will go down in history as being as big of a shock and causing as much sadness for his fans as Elvis and John Lennon's. Here he was, preparing to start a seven-month-long concert tour. The first of 50 stops on the tour was supposed to be in England, just two weeks away from his death. Then, out of nowhere, bam! He drops dead.

As of this writing in mid-July, there is still no official cause of death that's been released to the media. But that never stops anybody from speculating, does it? On every channel you turned to for the first few days after Michael's passing, you had 'experts' weighing in on what they think killed him. A bunch of so-called friends were all too eager to jump on TV and talk about the drugs he used, how he treated his kids, his eccentricities like a supposed secret obsession with Nazi Germany, etc. Fuck me, nice friends he had, all trying to cash in on his death before his body was even cold!

One thing I saw on the news that absolutely disgusted me was seeing T-shirt vendors hawking Michael shirts with the dates of his birth and death, outside the coroner's office in L.A. just a couple hours after they brought his body there! Man, they got those printed up fast. Sometimes I really wonder about us humans and the depths we will stoop to, just to make a buck. And of course, all the old allegations about child molestation were being recycled to fill airtime on TV. He was cleared of the charges, so why can't they let it go, especially now that he's dead and can't respond in any way? Yes, he did settle out of court rather than going to trial over it. That was probably a bad move, as it led many people to assume he was guilty. Personally, I think he just wanted the whole thing to go away instead of enduring months and months of trials.

Michael Jackson was definitely a strange man. But who isn't these days? The poor bastard never had a childhood. His abusive father had him spending every waking moment either practicing or performing from the age of eight on. As an adult, he wound up acting like a big kid because he missed out on being a kid. He had sleepovers with children sharing a big bed with him. Didn't you and I do that as kids? I never fucked the other kids in bed with me, or fondled their genitals. Did you? Don't answer; I don't want to know.

I really think Michael never grew up mentally or emotionally. He really was a big kid and honestly never saw what he was doing as wrong or even odd in the least. I have to wonder about the people with their minds in the gutter who always assumed everything was sexual. They are the truly sick fucks with the pedophile fantasies!

Why can't we just let Michael Jackson rest in peace? He was one of the greatest talents of the late 20th century, and I rank him right up there with The Beatles and Elvis, in terms of musical influence. His music, dancing, and music videos were always way ahead of their time. He was a true trendsetter. Sure, he was a bit strange. But maybe it's because everything the poor guy did was out in public. He lived his whole life in a fishbowl, and I don't blame him for being depressed.

The world made him a superstar and elevated him to godlike status, which I don't think he was ever comfortable with. I remember one time he was in a mall and got spotted and had to be locked inside a record store so he wouldn't be mobbed by fans. I know, because I was locked in there with him, until the police were able to get him out safely! Then the world tore him down and shit on him, made him a pariah and a joke. How would that feel?

I only hope he has found peace wherever he is, that his children are well looked-after, and his family can grieve for him in their own way, without being under a magnifying glass.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

THE GOSPEL—ACCORDING TO LEE

Debts Killed Michael?

One of the people who came out with his two cents about the cause of The King of Pop's death was The Incredible Hulk himself, Lou Ferrigno. Apparently Lou had known Michael since 1995 and had actually been training him for the last couple months to get him back in shape for his tour, which was his plan to pay back the $400 million he owed to creditors.

"He was under tremendous stress, so much I think it killed him," said Ferrigno. "In the past, he had backed out of doing live shows, but this time he was under the gun. The debts put a huge strain on him."

So his debts killed him now? Oh, bullshit. It that was the case, half the U.S. population would be dead, because they're all up to their eyeballs in debt these days. Of course debt causes stress and that can kill you in extreme cases, but who knows what else Michael Jackson was going through in his troubled life? He seemed to be in good health, and people close to him say he was upbeat and in good spirits. Jackson supposedly was really looking forward to getting back out onstage and showing the world, and his kids, that he was still one of the greatest performers alive. I read that he even had all the concerts scheduled with a day or two of rest in between so he wouldn't get burned out.

Everyone else has a theory, so here's mine. I think when the autopsy results come back; we'll find out that it had something to do with the painkillers or muscle relaxers he was taking. Drugs killed Heath Ledger and Anna Nicole Smith, and I bet they did Michael in, too. Another great young talent (well, Anna wasn't exactly talented, but she was young) gone from this earth too soon. Prescription drugs, and especially mixing them, is clearly becoming an epidemic health problem lately.

For every famous person who gets harmed by them, there must be thousands of regular people you never hear about. Don't you feel safe knowing that the various local and federal law enforcement agencies are out there going after pot, steroids, and heroin, while untold thousands die every year as a result of drugs they legally bought over the counter (including nicotine) and at the local pharmacy? If you think your government has your health and best interests in mind, think again. They want you sick and spending big bucks on prescription drugs, because the big pharmaceutical companies have the government in their back pockets.

If America were full of fit and healthy people, those companies would go belly up! Don't you find it suspiciously ironic that we have more knowledge of how to eat healthy, all these fat-free and sugar-free foods available, and so many more gyms than in decades past, but obesity is worse than ever? Looks like I've veered off topic once again, huh? In any case, I really doubt that stress over his debts killed Michael Jackson, as he was one of the few people in a situation like that who was capable of actually making enough money to pay it all off.

My Super-short Olympia Preview

Since this is the Mr. Olympia Preview issue of MD, I was asked to rate the top Mr. Olympia competitors, based on their strong and weak points and past performances. Sorry, I won't do it! Every year we read these previews and predictions and they mean nothing. Who cares what I think anyway? It all comes down to the judging, and how the guys look on that day. My opinion is worth about as much as some old Enron stocks.

As for the 202 Showdown, I don't care to comment. Just like with the Mr. Olympia, you have to wait and see how each guy looks on the day of the contest. We have all seen photos the athletes post a few weeks out where they look amazing, then they somehow wind up looking like shit at the show. And vice versa, some guys seem to be way behind, but then they walk onstage and you're like Holy Fuck, how did he whip himself into shape so fast?

The bottom line is that this year's Mr. Olympia is wide open for any one of several guys to take it. I say best of luck to them all, and may the best man win. I don't see any one guy standing out the way it was in the days of Dorian and Ronnie. Whoever wants it most should win, so I think this will be the most exciting Mr. Olympia we have had in a long time. Kinda makes me wish I were in it!

Stupid Question of the Month!

Lee, I want to know if you agree with me about something that has been bothering me— so-called 'natural' bodybuilders! I know these guys are all liars and cheats. Everybody knows you can't build any kind of physique without drugs. These losers just want credit for something they don't deserve. As a man who has always been up front about his own 'supplement' use, don't you hate seeing all these bodybuilders claiming to be natural when they are probably just using lower doses of steroids and GH than the pros do?

Not all natural bodybuilders are using drugs. I have known some people who built great bodies and did not use drugs. It can be done up to a certain level. Now, as for the ones who claim to be natural but do use drugs? Fuck them! I hate liars and hypocrites. They can't compete with other bodybuilders who are on stuff either, because they have shit genetics or a shit work ethic. So they enter natural shows with an unfair advantage, trying to win.

Personally, I love it when a guy on shit enters a natural show and gets his ass handed to him by a genuinely clean competitor. Man, do they get pissed off! And wonder of wonders, the first thing out of their mouths (or more likely these days, off their fingers on a keyboard) is how the guy who beat him was juicing. He had to be, because he beat ME and I was on drugs! Sorry jackass, the fact that he beat you doesn't mean he was cheating, too. It just means you really suck and shouldn't be entering bodybuilding competitions. Really, if you have to take drugs to compete in natural shows, give it up, ya fucking fool! Or, just do the right thing and compete in non-tested shows where anyone can use whatever they want.

On a related subject, there are also some natural bodybuilders who annoy the hell out of me with their smug attitudes.





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THE GOSPEL— ACCORDING TO LEE

I always find it amusing when guys come up to me and say something like, "Hi Lee, nice to meet you. You know, I compete also, but I'm natural." I think, what exactly are you implying, asshole? If you're reading this and you have been one of these guys, hopefully you can see how smarmy that sounds. Should I go around introducing myself like, "Hi, my name is Lee Priest, and I'm fully loaded up on all kinds of shit!" Dumb-asses.

What makes these guys feel so superior? Just because they choose not to use steroids? That doesn't make you any better or worse than the next guy, so there is no need to announce your natural status at every opportunity. The guys who kill me are the ones who are actually on drugs but still look like shit, so they lie about it. They are often the first ones to tell you they're natural, because that's their excuse for not having a decent physique. Often they do look so bad that no one questions it, even when they have gyno, raging acne all over their shoulders and back and puffy red faces.



I guess people figure that nobody could possibly have such a shitty physique if they were using steroids! I've had friends who really were clean but got accused of being on drugs all the time because they looked so good. Good genetics and years of hard training and good eating can produce some impressive results. Listen, I could really care less what people do. If you choose to train naturally, good for you. But don't go around like a cocky fuck, thinking that makes you better— it doesn't! Do you think you will be sitting in front of God and Jesus on Judgment Day and they will be letting the natural bodybuilders through the pearly gates and flinging the juicers down into the pit of fire and brimstone?

Another thing that galls me is when natural guys proclaim, "If I used drugs, I would be winning pro shows." That's a nice delusion, but it's ridiculous. If you were good enough to win pro shows, you would have gone on stuff and done it, you conceited cunt. Now, go train, and stop all the natural bullshit talk because *no one cares.* If indeed there are a lot of cheaters competing in natural shows, which I don't doubt (I've talked to some of them who say they do it because they are sure everyone else is anyway), then I say get rid of the natural shows altogether.

What does 'natural' even mean these days, anyway? If you want to be truly natural, you would just eat food and not take any type of supplements. Some of the supplements now definitely have drug-like effects anyway, so how can you say someone loaded up on the whole inventory from GNC is natural? Go train, compete, and have fun doing it. And if one more dumb fuck comes up to me and says, "Hi, my name is so-and-so and I'm natural," I may just have to beat him upside the head with a cricket bat. And you know I would have an excuse— 'roid rage! ■

Can't get enough of the outspoken Mr. Priest? Go to www.musculardevelopment.com forums, and check out The Lee Priest Zone, his very own section of the No Bull forum.

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By Gregg Valentino

Welcome back my friends, to the show that never ends. We're so glad you could attend. Come inside! Come inside!... **MuscularDevelopment.com *24 HOURS A DAY*** BABE**... *wink wink*** YOOOOOO, WHAT'S UP, WHAT'S GOOD... ***FUCK OFF!!!!***... THEY SAY, ***"There is no vaccine against stupidity"*** I THINK ALL FORUMS PROVE THAT TO BE A FACT... BUT... ON THE ***MuscularDevelopment.com "NO BULL"*** FORUM, WE HAVE ***LESS*** **STUPID PEOPLE** THAN MOST FORUMS ON THE NET... I'M REALLY IMPRESSED AT HOW THINGS HAVE REALLY TAKEN OFF AND NOW THE ***MD*** FAMILY HAS A NEW EDITION *(EXCUSE ME WHILE I WIPE AWAY MY TEARS.)*... YES, THE ***MD*** **NO BULL** WEBSITE IS KICKING ASS AND GROWING BIGGER & STRONGER EVERY DAY... ***Little things affect little minds...*** SO NOW, I'M GOING TO SHUT MY PIEHOLE AND LET ***YOU PINHEADS*** FEEL THE LOVE... HEY, YOUR FELLOW FANS ARE TALKING, MINGLING WITH THE PROs, IT'S THAT COOL... READ FOR YOURSELVES, BUT AS FOR ME, I'M GOING TO GRAB SOME SLEEP... I BEEN SPENDING WAY TOO MUCH TIME ON THE FORUM, I'M TOO DAMN ADDICTED**... I NEED REST!!!**... ***You know you should go to sleep when the sheep your counting start to hit the fence!!!!... OK OK OK...*** I MADE MY POINT NOW LET'S MEET SOME OF THE COOL PEOPLE FROM THE ***MuscularDevelopment.com FORUM FAMILY***, IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER & GET A CHANCE TO BE FEATURED IN **THE BEST DAMN *BODYBUILDING MAGAZINE* ON THE PLANET**... IT'S LIKE LOTTO, ***YA GOTTA BE IN IT TO WIN IT***... UMMM EXCUSE ME, YES I'M DONE NOW... **Anyone who told you to be yourself couldn't have given you worse advice...** SPEAKING OF ADVICE, ***SHAWN RAY*** IS GIVING IT AWAY FOR FREE... OH YEAH, BABE, HE AND OTHER ***MD*** **PROS** ARE ON THE ***MD*** **WEBSITE,** GIVING OUT SECRETS TO ALL THE MEMBERS... HEY, DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT— GO THERE YOURSELVES... BUT FIRST, A FEW TEASERS TO GET YOUR MIND CORRECT!!!

5 Q&A WITH ***SHAWN RAY*** TAKEN DIRECTLY OFF THE ***MD*** **FORUM**... ***SHAWN*** ANSWERS EVERYONE'S QUESTIONS AND THAT MEANS YOU GET TO LEARN FROM A **TRUE *BODYBUILDING LEGEND... SHAWN RAY* SPEAKS:**

Q. How many meals did you eat per day during the off-season?

A. Six; every three hours, beginning at around 6 a.m.

Q. When you carbed-up for a show, which foods did you use and when did you cut your water?

A. I typically carb-up on yams, oatmeal and potatoes. I cut water on Friday, the night before the Saturday afternoon prejudging.

Q. What's your take on training a body part twice a week?

A. I did that my entire career and seems to have paid off in spades!

Q. How was your schedule set up for twice-weekly training?

A. I always changed my schedule, just to keep things interesting. There is no right or wrong schedule, just find one that suits you and stay with it until you're no longer feeling the rush, then switch it up.

Q. How much cardio did you do in the off-season?

A. Typically 3 or 4 days a week 40-45 minutes at a time alternating treadmill and Life Cycle.

NOW LET'S HEAR FROM ONE OF MY FAVORITE ***MD*** **PROS EVAN CENTAPONI,** WHO IS ON THE FORUM EVERY DAY, TALKING TO ALL THE MEMBERS...

Originally posted by **Evan Centopani...** I think low carbs is the way to go for MOST people. I think it's better for your health and most people would feel and look much better taking in less carbs. Unless of course you're an athlete, bodybuilders or do manual labor etc. and NEED lots of carbs for energy. But for sedentary people, the carbs just make them fat and unhealthy. For you, I would train with weights three days a week. For example:

Monday:	Legs (Squats)
Wednesday:	Chest (Presses)
Friday: Back	(Deadlifts)

I would spend no more than 45 minutes on each session, but spend the whole time on just one exercise. MASTERING the basic movements is very important and is something most people NEVER do. Besides, these movements burn a lot of calories. On the days you don't weight train, go for a walk. Cardio is good for EVERYONE. Stick to maybe a half hour or so. This is a very solid start...

WOW!!!!... MY BOY **EVAN** TELLS IT LIKE IT IS AND HAS HELPED OUT A LOT OF ***MD*** **FORUM** MEMBERS WITH THEIR TRAINING... THESE PROS NORMALLY GET PAID FOR ADVICE, BUT ON THE ***MD*** **FORUM** IT'S ALL PART OF BEING AN ***MD*** **FAMILY MEMBER**... AND LET'S NOT FORGET THAT MD IS THE HOME OF BALCO CHEMIST **PATRICK ARNOLD,** WHO IS ALSO GIVING OUT AWESOME ADVICE TO EVERYONE... GEEZ, **BARRY BONDS** PAID FOR THE ADVICE OUR ***MD*** **MEMBERS** ARE GETTING FOR **FREE**... YO', *FUCK THAT* I'M GOING BACK ON THE FORUM, I'LL SLEEP LATER, I'M GONNA GO READ MORE OF **PATRICK ARNOLD'S** POSTS... SEE YA ALL NEXT MONTH...

QUESTION: ***Patrick, I've read that superdrol is stronger than dianabol— can this be true? Is this the old formula that they are talking about— or is the re-formulated product just as good?...***
Patrick Arnold's reply >> In the end, you probably will make more gains from an optimal dose of dbol than one of superdrol. That's because the side effects build up from superdrol so much more and the end result is that they will interfere with your health and therefore gains... but on a mg per mg level, sd is stronger for sure.

MD* FORUM BREAKING NEWS: *JOE PIETARO,* A MAINSTREAM SPORTS WRITER** WHO IS ALSO A REGULAR POSTER ON THE ***MD FORUM, RECENTLY INTERVIEWED ***RONNIE COLEMAN*** FOR THE **MD** MEMBERS... KEEP IN MIND, JOE IS A REPORTER WITH THE **NY METS**, **YANKEES**, ***NEW YORK* JETS**... HE WAS EVEN ONE OF **THE 2009 SUPERBOWL *REPORTERS*** COVERING THE SUPERBOWL FOR **NY SPORTS MAGAZINE**... HERE IS WHAT ***JOE PIETARO*** HAD TO SAY ABOUT SITTING DOWN WITH ***RONNIE COLEMAN*** >> I just finished interviewing Ronnie Coleman on my radio show and he confirmed that he is coming back to compete in the 2010 Mr. Olympia. He said that he just made up his mind "a few days ago." He was hoping to compete in this year's show but his travel commitments were too much and wouldn't allow him to have the proper time to prepare. He further stated that any talk of him tarnishing his legend is nonsense and that he does this "for fun." Although he may not be the same Ronnie of old, a professional like him will make sure that he is in the right condition for this. The way he looks during his guest posing routines is not an indication of contest shape. Coleman further stated in the interview that the time off (especially to recuperate from his back surgery after the 2007 Olympia) will be an advantage for him... **Joe Pietaro**... ***Those of you who think you know everything are very annoying to those of us who do...*** SO SHUT UP!!!!

Excuse me. I'm from the FBI, the Fine Body Investigators, and I'm going to have to ask you to assume the position... *OH YEAH BABE...* I LOVE THIS LITTLE HOTTIE & SHE IS A VERY IMPORTANT PERSON ON THE ***MD* BOARD,** AS WELL AS **THE *MD* FAMILY.**

Name: **Beni Lopez (Benincia)**
Forum name: **Lil Mama**
Age: **42**
Zodiac sign: **Cancer: Loving and Emotional, Shrewd and Cautious, Sensitive and Nurturing, Intuitive, as well as imaginative Sympathetic and Protective**
Hometown: **San Antonio, Texas**
Height: **4 feet 11 inches (in my mind, I like to think I'm taller)**
Measurements: **38"-25"-38"**
Eyes: **light brown**
Off-season weight: **138 pounds**
Competition weight: **105 pounds**
Favorite Food: **A thick, juicy, rib eye steak (med/rare)**
Favorite Junk Food: **Double chocolate fudge cake**
Favorite Quote: **"Love is that condition in the human spirit so profound that it allows me to survive, and better than that, to thrive with passion, compassion, and style." Maya Angelou**
Favorite Makeup: **I'm a low-maintenance gal. Mascara and lip gloss, sunscreen— that's it. (smile)**
Sports/Activities/Hobbies: **Indoor rock climbing, sewing and baking**
Favorite TV Show: **DIRTY JOBS**
Favorite Music: **Anything that gets my booty shaking**



Biggest influence in your life: **My family**
Favorite Body Part to train: **Legs**
Your best asset (Body part): **Glutes**
Future plans/goals: **To one day be onstage at the Ms. Olympia; other than that, living life day by day and enjoy my family.**

Wow... what an honor to be chosen as this month's Hot Forum Member Babe! I wanna say LOL... not because it's funny, but more because I don't perceive myself as "HAWT" but more like your everyday gal, not giving much thought of my outside appearance or what others think— just living life as simple as possible and making sure everybody I love and care for are taken care of and that their needs are being met.



I have to say that I have been an avid reader of MD for the longest time and never in my wildest imagination did I ever think I would grace the pages of MD as a Hot Babe... boy, have times changed for me, from being a supervisor of 15 C-stores in Dallas, to being a mom, then finding my way back to a healthy lifestyle after having three kids and all along, through my 10+ years of working out, MD HAS BEEN MY REFERENCE BOOK. MD has truly inspired and motivated me to continue the quest of perfecting my body, mind and soul, with all the great articles and workout regimens

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and vast array of information on supplements.

I am especially proud of the fact that MD is once again devoting more space to feature strong, fit, athletic females in their pages and I am truly appreciative of that!! Like the saying goes "behind every great man there stands a great woman" and to me that means not one is greater than the other. They each bring certain aspects the other does not have. They both are supportive of each other. One is not weaker than the other. They are both strong. So many thanks to MD and may you have a Benilicious Month (meaning of Benilicious: being content with what I have, have been given or earned and always smile— you never know who might need one.) **DID SOMEONE SAY SOMETHING????... YO' I MISSED IT— WHAT HAPPENED???... I WAS JUST IN THE BATHROOM, LOOKING AT Beni's PICTURES AND... OK, NEVER MIND!!!!!!**

Name: ***Will Hamilton***
MD* Forum member screen name:** ***VenomX
Hometown: ***Biloxi, MS***
Age: ***28***
Years Bodybuilding: ***14 yrs training, 3 yrs competing***
Goal for the future: ***Pro Card***
Favorite Bodybuilders: ***Rich Gaspari, Flex Lewis, Phil Heath, Dennis Wolf, Kevin Levrone***

This has been a whirlwind year for me. I graduated school with a masters degree of Architecture in May of 2008. I immediately got back into the gym after graduating and maxed out at 235 pounds before beginning my diet for the Jr. USA. Along the way, I met and became friends with Flex Lewis, who has been a constant encouragement for me over the last year. Flex invited me to attend the Gaspari Dragon's Den Seminar in Franklin, TN, where I met Rich Gaspari and the rest of Team Gaspari.



I gained a lot of useful information and the Dragon Slayer himself put me through a shoulder workout! I made my national debut at the Jr. USA's in Charleston, SC. I placed 4th in the heavyweight division, which was great for my first time on the national stage, but I knew I could do better. The next week, Flex hooked me up with his trainer, the Welsh Wizard, Neil Hill!



In 10 days, Neil completely transformed my physique and I stepped onstage at the Southern Classic in Jackson, MS and won the Overall title with my best conditioning ever. Soon after, I was contacted by Gaspari's VP of Marketing, Joe Volgey, and offered a sponsorship! It has been a great year and now, under the guidance of Neil, I'm prepping for USA's 2010.

ZZZZZ... ZZZZZ... ZZZZZ... WHAT!!!... WHAT, WAS THAT NOISE???... *Will Hamilton,* DID YOU SAY SOMETHING MEANINGFUL... OH, OK... I DIDN'T THINK SO... WELCOME TO ***MD,* WILL!**

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500-Word Essay Contest

By David Burton

Poetry and bodybuilding; they don't really come across as going together well— but YukonCrazy has found a way to blend them. A few months back, this talented writer blended Shakespeare and bodybuilding and won this contest; now he is back with a poetic entry which won a hard-fought contest. Here it is for your enjoyment.

You, Me, and MD!

by YukonCrazy

I am YukonCrazy and I post on MD,
You may recognize me, but I am not WisconsinBB.
MD has pro's LEE PREIST, PJ Braun, and Evan Centopani,
Even Bodybuilding's biggest fan, Mayor of Bodybuilding!
We can all thank Steve Blechman for what MD is today,
Robbie Durand, Flex Wheeler, Dorian Yates, and Shawn Ray.
MD forums is where it is at for training and nutrition,
Heavyiron, Ron Harris, Scoobysnacks, and Layne Norton.
Colourful characters like Curt James, Howard, and TKC1,
Help diversify this site, but I do miss Aaron Singerman.
He and Triceptor have their own Off Topic show,
BLP, Derek Anthony, even Anthony Roberts have been on the radio.
MD is like family when I think of VinnyN1026 and FitAdina,
Buddies like DaveV, bbrules, pmaks88, BIG BRI, & Pantera!
Daily Pump Pic members Tjoe, JayKurk, AegisFang & Lil Mama,
All the way to the Pit with Dlew, Foreman Rules, Stackndeca, and Anabolic1.
MD has everything in between with Branch Warren, Patrick Arnold, Mike Liberatore and Brandon Ray,
The landlord, Tiny Tim, -Z-, Leave 1, and Mr. Eddie.
Posters like Vince Goodrum, Hardly Krishna, Hollidae, and SexyBeast777,
I wish I could trade them all to get back Thegame7687!
I hope MD never loses Warrior, davidd, or The Adman,
They keep the site headed in the right direction.
Lovely ladies like Quadrablue, playmate, ISABELLE TURELL,
To DoubleyaG, constellation, LilSho, and JuicyGlamGirl
We have lots of muscle here at MD forums, too!
Maxinemuscle, musclequest, yukon muscle, and Gregg Valentino!
MD has the newest IFBB guys in the industry,
From Dennis Wolf, Fouad Abiad, Erik Fankhouser and Mark Alvisi!
MD has men and women of all ages and walks of life that post,
Ukrainian Guy is a senior moderator with the most posts!
MD has been through a transition as of late, did you know?
No longer employed are John Romano and Dave Palumbo.
From Swede to Seige, from Justin Harris to Venom X,
Vulcan, Kraken, Zack Khan, SEAN ALLAN, and BIG MIKE COX!
Some posters here maybe Too Powerful4u, others are all Traps.n.Quads.
We have a Myth, Red Devil, and there is always Goodfellas.
There is Karenfromcali, Maryland Muscle, and all the way to the other side of the world with Norway Power.
Vids by Mike Pulcinella and jokes from Mike the Ripper!
Muscular Development magazine is international, inspirational, and educational.
Muscular Development videos are hardcore, entertaining, and comical.Muscular Development forums is the best on the net,Thanks MD! And, all the posters I will never forget.

What a great advertisement for our forums! YukonCrazy has captured the essence of what makes MD great. We are a community; you could even say we are a family. The forums make everyone feel welcome, whether you are an experienced lifter or a complete novice, you can get all the information on almost any bodybuilding subject you want. The forums are a goldmine of information and I thoroughly recommend any MD readers who have not yet signed up to get online and check them out.

At the time of writing, we have 68,011 members. By the time this is published, it could well be over 70,000 members and that is a lot of minds all sharing their knowledge and experience. YukonCrazy has mentioned many of our regular members; people who you will get to know if you come along and join. Then there are those who did not get mentioned; they are all still vital members who contribute regularly.

YukonCrazy has impressed the powers that be at MD enough that he is now a 'Forum Leader.' So I must say congratulations to him for that and also a congratulations for winning this contest again!. As usual, if you have been inspired by this, head on over to the forums and enter an article yourself. Next month it could be *you* printed in the pages of MD!

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD



Moderate-Intensity Aerobic Exercise Boosts Testosterone Levels

In October 2008, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) issued exercise guidelines for healthy adults that advised at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity. The report cited hundreds of studies demonstrating the health benefits of regular exercise. It seems as though every week scientists find new ways that exercise benefits health. Polish scientists showed that moderate exercise, such as that recommended by the USDHHS, increased testosterone levels in healthy men. Five weeks of training on a stationary bike increased testosterone by 15 percent, maximal oxygen consumption (a measure of cardiovascular fitness) by 3.7 percent, and pedaling power by 8.2 percent. Testosterone decreases gradually with age and contributes to loss of muscle and bone mass, poor sexual performance, psychological depression, and decreased quality of life. Regular, moderate-intensity exercise is a simple way to maintain testosterone levels and prevent some of the effects of aging. (*International Journal Sports Medicine*, 30:489-495, 2009)

Bench Shirt Improves Efficiency of Bar Path

Powerlifters often use bench shirts to provide upper-body support and increase the weight they can lift. Skilled lifters wearing a bench shirt can improve bench press strength by 200 pounds or more. Powerlifting federations recognize the advantage provided by bench shirts and now hold competitions with and without the shirts. Tobin Silver from Purdue University and colleagues found that bench shirts decreased the variability in the path of the bar during the bench press, and allowed athletes to bench more weight. They concluded that the bench shirt improved lifting efficiency and consistency, and decreased the forces acting on the shoulder during the lift, which might decrease the risk of injury. Few older bench pressers escape serious shoulder rotator cuff injury, so this study might have important practical significance. (*Journal Strength Conditioning Research*, 23: 1125-1128, 2009)

Significant Spinal Loading During Strongman Events

Strongman events, such as lifting heavy stones, have existed for as long as guys have hung around together. For example, a carving on a 316-pound rock from the sixth century BC found at Olympia proclaimed, "Bybon, son of Phola, lifted me over his head with one hand." While strongmen events have always been on the fringes of sport, they have become more popular because athletes use the techniques to develop functional fitness. These events, which include farmer's walk, super yoke, Atlas stone lift, suitcase carry, keg walk, tire flip, and log lift, have also become popular television events.

Stuart McGill from Waterloo University in Canada and colleagues found that strongman events push the capacity of the spinal extensor muscles and disks. They emphasize the importance of activating the hip extensors before the spinal muscles. They also suggested that 'carrying' events, such as the farmer's walk and suitcase carry, work the body in a unique way that could complement traditional weight-training methods. Strongman events require proper leg, hip and spinal biomechanics to prevent injury and maximize performance. (*Journal Strength Conditioning Research,* 23: 1148-1161, 2009)

Endurance and Strength Workouts Interfere With Each Other

The genetic and biochemical mechanisms of adaptation to weight training and endurance training are different. A review of literature by John Hawley from Australia concluded that mixing training methods causes interference in physiological adaptation. High-intensity muscle contractions, which occur during bodybuilding or weightlifting, promote muscle strength and growth. Low-intensity, prolonged exercise, such as distance running or cycling, builds muscle cell mitochondria (cell energy centers) and promotes endurance. Endurance workouts activate a biochemical pathway linked to improved muscle endurance (AMPK-PGC-1alpha) and depress a pathway linked to muscle hypertrophy (Akt-mTOR-S6K). The

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

reverse occurred following weight training. Doing different types of exercise in close proximity (e.g., weight training followed closely by endurance training) interfere with the adaptation to both types of exercise. People adapt to varying types of training best when they do them on separate days, or at least at different times of the day. This is important information for bodybuilders, power athletes, and endurance athletes. (*Applied Physiology Nutrition Metabolism*, 34: 355-361, 2009)

Tourniquet Training: Safe and Effective?

Occlusion or tourniquet training involves exercising with restricted blood flow to the working muscles. Decreasing muscle blood flow may trigger cell damage, inflammation, cell stress, and anabolic hormone release. Muscles grow in response to physical and chemical stress, so it seems reasonable that restricting blood flow to muscles during training might promote hypertrophy. A review of literature by Jeremy Loenneke and Thomas Pujol concluded that moderate occlusion training builds muscle mass and strength using only 20 percent of one-repetition maximum. Occlusion training might work by increasing muscle fatigue, which causes increased recruitment of muscle fibers and a greater training effect. Also, it triggers large increases in growth hormone and IGF-1, which are anabolic hormones that make muscles grow.

Occlusion also restricts oxygen delivery to the fibers, which might promote hypertrophy. However, blood flow restriction decreases muscle tension, which is critical for building muscle strength and size. Occlusion could also cause rhabdomyolysis— muscle cell destruction that releases muscle proteins into the bloodstream, which could severely restrict kidney function. While occlusion training might have clinical applications in physical therapy and space travel, it does not produce the benefits of traditional weight training. (*Strength Conditioning Journal*, 31: 77-84, 2009)

How High-Intensity Interval Training Works

Short bouts of maximal-intensity exercise (HIT) build high levels of fitness quickly. A remarkable study by Canadian researchers found that six sessions of high-intensity interval training on a stationary bike increased muscle oxidative capacity (citrate synthase) by almost 50 percent, muscle glycogen by 20 percent, and cycle endurance capacity by 100 percent.

The subjects made these amazing improvements exercising a mere 15 minutes in two weeks (4-8 sets of 30 seconds of exercise, maximum; 4 minutes rest between sets). A follow-up study in moderately-active women using the same training method showed that interval training increased whole-body and skeletal muscle capacity for fat use during exercise. The key element in both studies was training at 100 percent of maximum effort.

Martin Gibala from McMaster University in Canada described the physiological adaptations to HIT in a review of literature. HIT activates an oxidative enzyme system— peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor-gamma coactivator 1alpha; PGC-1alpha— normally turned on by endurance exercise that stimulates the growth of mitochondrial mass, which is highly related to endurance capacity. Mitochondria are the energy centers of the cells that convert food energy into energy the muscles and other tissues can use for exercise and metabolism. HIT is an amazing way to train that produces large results in a short time. (*Applied Physiology Nutrition Metabolism*, 34: 428-432, 2009)

Growth Hormone Increases More in Women Than Men During Interval Sprints

A series of studies from Estonia showed that in non-athletes, sprinting triggers increases in muscle cross-sectional area in women, but not in men. This finding is puzzling and seems to fly in the face of common sense, but the results are well documented. Mona Esbjörnsson and colleagues from the Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden found that growth hormone increased more in women than men during and after three 30-second sprints, with 20 minutes rest between sprints. Lactate, glucose, and ammonia increased more in men. Testosterone decreased in men, but increased in women. They concluded that the anabolic hormone response might explain the gender differences in muscle cross-sectional area in response to sprint intervals in untrained men and women. These results may not apply to well-trained athletes. (*Acta Physiologica Scandinavica*, in press; published online May 2009)

Activity of Androgen-Linked Genes Vary With Free Testosterone Levels

Androgens, such as testosterone, influence genes that promote protein synthesis in skeletal muscle and many other tissues. Testosterone and free testosterone decrease with age, which could influence the effects of exercise on skeletal muscle and physical fitness. Researchers from the University of Oklahoma, led by Michael Roberts, found that androgen-linked gene activity increased with higher levels of free testosterone. They examined testosterone levels and gene activity in younger and older men involved in a weight-training session. Free testosterone levels increased more in younger men, but there were no differences in growth hormone levels. Muscle mass decreases with age, which might be due to decreases in anabolic hormones such as testosterone. Studies like this help shed light on the physiology of muscle wasting that occurs with age. (*Journal Strength Conditioning Research*, 23: 1060-1067, 2009)

MD RESEARCH Fat Loss

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Mississippi and Alabama are the Fattest States

Every year, the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation release a detailed report on the status of obesity in America. The 2009 report showed that America is in the midst of a public health disaster that is on par with the economic meltdown. Adult and childhood obesity rates increased 2-3 times during the past 30 years. In 2008, obesity rates increased in 23 states and didn't decrease in even one state.

Mississippi and Alabama are the fattest states, with obesity rates of 32.5 percent and 31 percent, while Colorado is the skinniest, with 18.9 percent obese. Health care costs expanded at an alarming rate during the past 10 years, in part due to the obesity epidemic. The economic downturn has increased the incidence of psychological depression and made it more difficult for families to purchase healthy foods, so it is likely that the obesity rate will continue to increase further in the years to come. (www.healthyamericans.org, July 2009)

High-Carbohydrate Diets Linked to Lower Obesity Rates

Low-carbohydrate diets promote weight loss best during the first six months of dieting, but high-carbohydrate diets are best for long-term weight control. A study of nearly 5,000 healthy adults from Canada, led by Anwar Merchant from the University of South Carolina, showed that people who ate more carbohydrates were less likely to be obese or overweight.

They divided the sample into quarters according to daily carbohydrate intake. The highest quarter consumed about 100 fewer calories per day and ate nearly double the fiber of the lowest quarter. The highest quarter also consumed 30 percent less protein and 50 percent less saturated fat.

An editorial from the American Dietetic Association said that while the study provided important information, it did not explore the influence of the type of carbohydrates in the diet on obesity and overweight. The study showed the importance of including carbohydrates in the diet for long-term weight control, particularly whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. (*Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 109:1165-1172, 2009; 109: 1163-1164, 2009)

Atkins Diet Linked to Heart Disease in Middle-aged Man

The Atkins diet, which is high in protein and fat and low in carbohydrates, is effective for short-term weight loss. For years, many heart specialists and public health experts criticized the diet because it is high in saturated fats, which promote heart disease.

A case study of a 51-year-old man showed the possible dangers of the diet. The diet causes Ketosis which produces methylglyoxal which is recognized as a significant cause of blood vessel and tissue damage. Before going on the diet, he showed no evidence of coronary artery disease. His cholesterol and LDL (bad cholesterol) were low at 145 and 85 mg/dL mg per deciliter and a heart calcium scan showed no evidence of coronary artery disease.

That changed when he went on the Atkins diet for three years. His cholesterol and LDL increased to 230 and 154, and he developed erection problems and chest pain. He was hospitalized for chest pain and had severe narrowing of one of his coronary arteries (supplies blood to the heart). Afterward, he went off the Atkins diet and his cholesterol and LDL returned to his pre-Atkins levels, and he stopped having erection problems.

This was only one case, so it doesn't mean that the Atkins diet will have this effect in everyone. (*Journal of the American Dietetic Association,* 109: 1263-1265, 2009)



Miracle Drug Cuts Fat in Rats

America is in the midst of an obesity epidemic that is contributing to escalating health care costs and decreased quality of life. Weight loss diets and exercise programs have been complete failures. A University of Indiana study showed that a drug made from chemicals that boost the action of the hormone glucagon caused rapid weight loss in rats.

The drug works by decreasing appetite and increasing metabolic rate. It has not been tested in humans. In 1995, scientists found similar results in rats after injecting a hormone leptin, but the treatment didn't work in humans. Hopefully, this new drug will be different. (*Nature Chemical Biology*, online Journal, July 13, 2009)

Illustrated by Jerry Beck/www.ironasylum.com

Fat Loss

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Beer Drinkers are Fatter

Recent studies questioned the link between fat bellies and beer drinking. People who drink moderately live longer, have fewer heart attacks and strokes, and a reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease and rheumatoid arthritis. Moderate drinking improves metabolic health by lowering insulin resistance, which influences sexual performance, abdominal fat deposition, blood pressure, blood fats (i.e., LDL and HDL cholesterol), and inflammation. High alcohol consumption might be one reason for the greater longevity in countries like France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Just when you thought it was safe to drink beer, another study comes along to show otherwise.

German researchers found a link between beer consumption and increased body fat. Their data shows that the beer belly is largely a myth. While beer drinkers had larger waist circumferences, they also had more body fat. Beer drinking was not related to increased body fat in women. The majority of studies show that moderate alcohol consumption is good for the health— at least in people without addiction or psychosocial problems related to drinking. (*European Journal Clinical Nutrition*, in press; published online June 24, 2009)

Exercise Does Not Increase 24-Hour Fat Burning

Exercise increases the capacity of muscle to use fat. A review of literature by Edward Melanson and coworkers from the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine concluded that exercise does not increase 24-hour fat use. The popular belief that exercise increases fat oxidation after exercise is a myth. Exercise promotes weight maintenance by creating a negative caloric balance and increasing muscle mass, which increases metabolic rate. The body uses fat stores when energy expenditure exceeds energy intake and fat intake is less than fat oxidation. They concluded that moderate-intensity exercise would not burn more fat unless people consumed fewer calories and less fat. While exercise is not a cure-all for fat loss, it has many positive effects on metabolic, musculoskeletal, and cardiorespiratory health. (*Exercise Science Sports Reviews*, 37: 93-101, 2009)

Obesity Causes Cartilage Loss

Decreases in cartilage that protects bone surfaces leads to joint pain and arthritis. Frank Roemer and colleagues from Boston University Medical School found that obese people over 50 showed accelerated cartilage loss in the knee. They measured cartilage changes over 30 months. One unit increase in body mass index (a measure of the proportion of height and weight) resulted in an 11 percent decrease in cartilage thickness.

They suggested that weight loss was the best way to prevent cartilage loss. Other studies found that weight training prevents cartilage loss and arthritis. Building strong muscles helps support the joints and prevents excessive stress on cartilage cells. (*Radiology*, in a press; August 2009)

CDC Reports Increase in Obesity Rate

The Centers for Disease Control reported that obesity rates in the United States increased from 25.6 percent in 2007 to 26.1 percent in 2008. Five states in the South have obesity rates greater than 30 percent. Health experts see no end in sight. The economic meltdown increased stress levels in millions of Americans, which contributes to weight gain. The economy has made it more difficult for the average family to afford healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Efforts to increase physical activity levels in adults and youth have been total failures.

People must take personal responsibility for their expanding waistlines by exercising more, consuming fewer calories, and eating healthier foods. Obesity rates are much higher than they were during the Great Depression, so the problem is more complex than lack of financial resources. (*Reuters*, July 9, 2009)



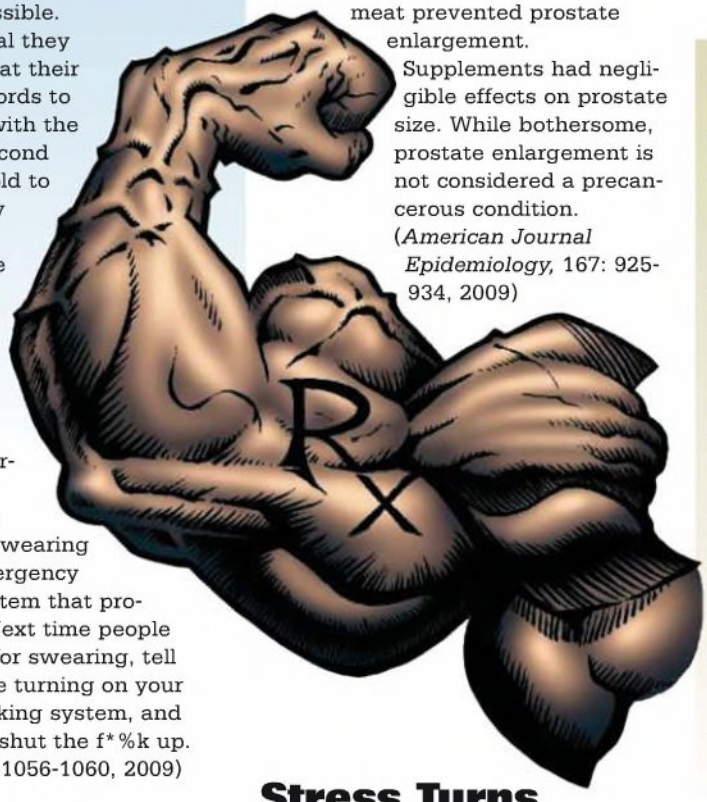
By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Frankly My Dear, I Don't Give a Damn

Do you swear when you drop a weight on your toe or pull a muscle? While most people condemn swearing in public, scientists found that it decreases pain. A study from Keele University in Britain found that swearing increased pain tolerance by 50 percent. Test subjects put their hand in a tub of freezing cold water for as long as possible.

During one trial they were told to repeat their favorite swear words to help them cope with the pain. During a second trial they were told to describe a nearby table. They kept their hands in the water longest when they swore. Swearing increased pain tolerance and heart rate and decreased the perception of pain.

The scientists speculated that swearing activates the emergency fight-or-flight system that promotes survival. Next time people dress you down for swearing, tell them that you are turning on your natural pain-blocking system, and that they should shut the f*%k up. (*NeuroReport*, 20:1056-1060, 2009)



Low-Fat Diets and Alcohol More Important Than Supplements for Preventing Enlarged Prostates

Enlargement of the prostate gland (benign prostatic hyperplasia, BPH) is common in aging men. It affects nearly 50 percent of men age 50 and 80 percent of men age 70. It can cause restriction of the tube leading from the bladder to the outside (urethra), frequent urination, urine retention, urinary urgency, and urinary tract infections.

A study from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle found that regular alcohol consumption and diets high in protein and vegetables and low in fat and red meat prevented prostate enlargement. Supplements had negligible effects on prostate size. While bothersome, prostate enlargement is not considered a precancerous condition. (*American Journal Epidemiology,* 167: 925-934, 2009)

Stress Turns Your Hair Gray

Have you noticed the increase in people with gray hair since the economic collapse? The nation's stress level has catapulted into the stratosphere and has turned us into a nation of gray heads. Look at photos of presidents Clinton and Bush at the beginning and end of their eight-year terms. By year eight, both had turned prematurely gray because of the constant stress of the job.

A study from the Cancer Research Institute at Kanazawa University in Japan showed that stress damages the genes that control cells called melanocytes. These cells secrete pigments that give hair its color. Stem cells that control melanocyte growth and repair die off gradually during constant stress, which causes gray hair. The best way to maintain a youthful hair color is to minimize stress throughout life— or use hair dye. (*Cell*, 137: 1088-1099, 2009)

Celebrex Reduces Muscle Soreness, but Does Not Slow Muscle Growth

COX-2 inhibitors, such as Celebrex, reduce inflammation and are used to treat arthritis, muscle and joint pain, and menstrual cramps. Several recent studies suggested that Cox-2 inhibitors and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatants interfere with muscle protein synthesis after weight training. Bodybuilders were urged to bite the bullet when they were sore and not take those drugs.

A Norwegian study found that Celebrex decreased muscle soreness after a bout of maximal eccentric exercise (negatives, or lengthening contractions), but did not interfere with protein synthesis. The drug had no effect on recovery of muscle function or blood markers of inflammation. COX-2 inhibitors decrease pain after intense weight training, but do not interfere with post-exercise muscle growth. (*Scandinavian Journal Medicine Science Sports,* in press; published online June 10, 2009)

New Surgery for Distal Biceps Tendon Ruptures

Ruptures of the distal (elbow side) biceps tendon are extremely rare, except in bodybuilders. It is most

Illustrated by Jerry Beck/www.ironasylum.com

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

common in 30-something-year-old athletes. Overtraining of the biceps muscle can weaken the distal tendon and cause it to fail. Typically, athletes feel a pop in the elbow joint, followed by intense pain. The biceps may retract up the arm, resulting in a Popeye-like arm. It is important to surgically repair this injury as soon as possible to get the best result.

Andrew Heinzelmann, from the Mississippi Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center in Jackson and co-authors described a surgical technique requiring a single incision, attaching a metal interface (soft tissue button) to the tendon, and then screwing the end of the tendon and its interface into the radius bone (forearm bone on thumb side). The procedure is followed by accelerated rehabilitation. The researchers claimed that athletes could resume normal activities after seven weeks. (*American Journal Sports Medicine,* 37: 989-995, 2009)

Platelet-rich Plasma Speeds Healing of Muscle Strains

Repetitive strain injuries are extremely common in bodybuilders because they often practice high rep, high-set programs to failure. Standard treatment for these injuries includes rest, ice, compression, elevation, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications. The injuries often take a long time to heal and are extremely frustrating for athletes.

A new treatment called platelet-rich plasma (PRP) might speed healing. The technique involves extracting blood platelets (a type of blood cell) from the athlete's blood and then injecting them into the injured muscle. Jason Hammond from the Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore and colleagues, in a study on rats, found that PRP shortened recovery time after muscle strain. The technique worked better following repetitive strain injuries than sudden muscle strains.

Currently, few physicians offer this treatment, but it looks extremely promising. PRP might be the answer to curing those muscle injuries that just won't go away. (*American Journal Sports Medicine*, 37: 1135-1142, 2009)

FDA Wants Smaller Doses of Acetaminophen

Acetaminophen may be dangerous to your health. Many people take the pain killer acetaminophen— the main ingredient in Tylenol and about 200 other products— instead of aspirin, because it is easier on the stomach. A group of scientists advised the FDA to reduce the recommended dose of acetaminophen sold over the counter.

Acetaminophen is the most common cause of liver failure. Overdoses of the drug are linked to more than 100 deaths and 2,000 cases requiring hospitalization due to liver damage per year. Typically, people mix two products that contain the drug. Researchers from the University of North Carolina found that the majority of patients given the maximum recommended dose of acetaminophen (4 grams per day) developed liver toxicity. Forty percent of patients experienced liver enzyme elevations three times above normal.

Researchers from the University of Washington noted that the incidence of acetaminophen-related liver failure has increased in recent years— in part because of fears about the safety of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and Cox-2 inhibitors (Vioxx and Celebrex). People who drink more than three alcoholic beverages a day are at risk of acetaminophen overdose— even if they take the recommended dosage. Don't take two products containing the drug when treating flu, muscle pain, or headache.

The FDA panel also recommended a ban on Vicodin and Percocet, because they are involved in so many deadly overdoses. (*The Wall Street Journal,* July 14, 2009)

Testosterone-Cortisol Ratio is a Good Measure of Aggressive Behavior

Testosterone is an anabolic hormone that influences sexual development, muscle growth, metabolism, and brain function. Cortisol is a stress hormone that mobilizes metabolism during disturbances of body balance such as exercise or illness. Sports scientists have used the testosterone-cortisol ratio as a measure of overtraining.

Psychologists from Utrecht University in Holland, in a review of literature, argued that a high testosterone-cortisol ratio promotes aggressive behavior. Higher testosterone levels were linked to activation of brain centers involved in the body's 'fight-or-flight' emergency system, while elevations in cortisol were linked to psychological inhibition. However, in severely overtrained athletes, cortisol decreases rather than increases, which can send them into a depressive, non-aggressive tailspin. Also, not all bodybuilders who take anabolic steroids (thus increasing the testosterone-cortisol ratio) exhibit aggressive behavior. So, their model has some kinks in it. (*International Law and Psychiatry*, in press; published online June 2009)

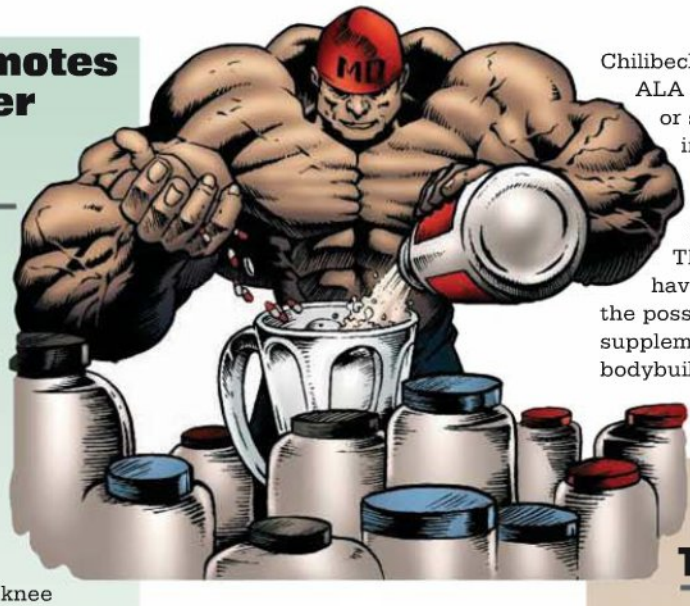
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By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Creatine Promotes Recovery After Eccentric Exercise

Creatine monohydrate increases strength and muscle mass in most people. It also speeds recovery after heavy training. An Australian study led by Matthew Cooke showed that creatine promoted recovery after intense eccentric exercise (4 sets X 10 reps negatives (lengthening contractions) at 120 percent maximum effort on leg presses, knee extensions, and leg curls). The workout was designed to cause muscle injury and soreness.

During recovery, muscle strength was 10-21 percent higher in men consuming creatine supplements, compared to a placebo (fake creatine). Blood creatine kinase levels, a marker of muscle damage, was 84 percent lower in men taking creatine. Creatine monohydrate promotes recovery from muscle damage caused by eccentric exercise and is an excellent supplement for bodybuilders. (*Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*, 6: 13, 2009; online journal)



Placebos Improve Performance

Placebos are fake drugs or supplements that have no physiological effects but work by the power of suggestion— you want them to work, so they do. Michael Duncan and colleagues from the United Kingdom showed that a placebo increased muscle endurance (knee extensions to failure) and reduced the perception of effort during exercise.

During three different sessions, men were told that they would receive a caffeine supplement, placebo, or no treatment during a maximum knee extension test to exhaustion. Instead, they were only given placebos. Subjects did two more reps and had a reduced perception of effort when they thought they were getting the caffeine supplements than when they thought they were taking a placebo. Your mind is the most important thing keeping you from achieving your goals. (*International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance,* 4, 244-253, 2009)

Alpha-Linolenic Acid Has No Effect on Muscle Mass or Strength in Older Adults

Adults experience increased levels of cellular inflammation as they age, which might cause sarcopenia— a reduction in muscle mass and strength. Supplements, such as alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) that reduce inflammation might be useful in older people involved in weight-training programs. Steven Cornish and Philip Chilibeck from Canada found that ALA had no effect on muscle mass or strength in older adults involved in a weight-training program. ALA decreased levels of interleukin-6, which is released during inflammation. This 12-week study might not have been enough time to judge the possible beneficial effects of the supplement. Its effects on young bodybuilders are unknown. (*Applied Physiology Nutrition Metabolism*, 34: 49-59, 2009)

Ergogenic Aids and Heat Tolerance

High muscle and core temperatures decrease performance and can lead to heat injury and death. Bodybuilders should be aware of the effects of supplements on temperature regulation. Rebecca Lopez and Douglas Casa from the University of Connecticut at Storrs summarized the literature on ergogenic aids, heat tolerance, and hydration. Contrary to popular belief, creatine has no effect on temperature regulation or hydration. While caffeine is a mild diuretic, it does not promote dehydration during exercise and has no effect on thermoregulation, sweat rate, fluid-electrolyte balance, or urine concentration. Glycerol increases fluid retention, but does not improve performance.

The Food and Drug Administration banned ephedra because it was linked to three heat stroke deaths in high-profile college and professional athletes. While ephedra increases heart rate and blood pressure, there is no evidence that it impairs temperature regulation. People respond differently to supplements and drugs, so it is possible that any of these supplements could adversely affect temperature regulation in individual athletes. (*Current Sports Medicine* Reports, 8: 192-199, 2009)

Illustrated by Jerry Beck/www.ironasylum.com

MD RESEARCH Supplements

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Quercetin Might Boost Physical Performance

Quercetin might be an effective supplement for active bodybuilders because it prevents illness and improves cell aerobic capacity. Quercetin is an antioxidant found in apple skins, cranberries, blueberries, onions, tea, and red wine. A literature review by Mark Davis and colleagues from the University of South Carolina concluded that quercetin reduces inflammation, boosts the immune system, stimulates mental performance, protects the heart from coronary artery disease, and prevents protein breakdown.

Quercetin supplements prevented colds and improved exercise performance in elite cyclists and increased mitochondria (cell energy centers) in rats. It also has caffeine-like effects, which might help it promote mental and physical performance. Quercetin supplements might prevent overtraining, strengthen the immune system, and improve general health. While it is considered a safe supplement, it builds up in the tissues, and we don't know its safety or effectiveness in high concentrations. (*Current Sports Medicine Reports*, 8: 206-213, 2009)

DAG Oil Prevents Obesity and Insulin Resistance

Diacylglycerol (DAG) is found in low concentrations in vegetable oils. A review of literature by Japanese researchers discussed the effects of DAG in human nutrition. DAG is a monounsaturated fat that reduces blood triglycerides (fats) and speeds fat loss. New processing techniques make it possible to produce large amounts of DAG from soy and canola oils. DAG works by limiting blood sugar formation in the liver (i.e., gluconeogenesis) and increasing fat use in muscle tissue. DAG oil is metabolized rapidly for energy rather than stored as fat (as are most oils).

In humans, Japanese researchers found that substituting DAG for normal cooking oil decreased blood triglycerides by 50 percent. People fed a diet containing 30 grams of DAG showed greater post-meal fat use and energy expenditure, compared to people given an equal amount of triglycerides. Diets high in DAG decrease weight gain and fat accumulation, particularly in the abdomen. DAG may be useful as a weight-loss product. It is sold in the U.S. as Enova oil and is available in most supermarkets. (*Biofactors*, 35:175-177, 2009)

Sodium Bicarbonate Increases Performance

Sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) improves sprint performance in events lasting less than two minutes, such as the 800-meter run. It works by increasing blood bicarbonate, which acts as a buffer against metabolic acids.

Polish researchers led by Adam Zajak found that sodium bicarbonate (17 grams mixed in water) improved swim sprinting speed in teenage swimmers during the first 50-meter sprint of an interval training workout (4x50-meter sprints) and decreased the overall time of the workout by 2 seconds. Blood lactate increased after exercise following bicarbonate administration because the buffer speeds the movement of lactate from the muscles to the blood. The swimmers had no side effects, but most studies reported gastrointestinal upset and diarrhea from taking bicarbonate supplements.

Bicarbonate might be a useful supplement for bodybuilders during intense weight-training sessions and for athletes training for high-intensity sports. Don't take sodium bicarbonate before a competition without trying it in practice, because about 50 percent of athletes have unpleasant gastrointestinal side effects! (*Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*, 8: 45-50, 2009)

Glutamine Is Vital For Arginine Synthesis

Glutamine and arginine are vital for a strong immune system and recovery from intense exercise. Arginine is an important stimulator of growth hormone, which is a powerful anabolic hormone that promotes muscle protein synthesis.

A Dutch study from Maastricht University found that supplements containing alanyl-glutamine promoted the synthesis of arginine in the body. They found that glutamine is involved in producing 64 percent of the arginine synthesized in the body. Intravenous administration of alanyl-glutamate doubled the production of arginine, but oral administration was still clinically significant. Glutamine and arginine play vital roles in adapting to the stresses of exercise. (*American Journal Clinical Nutrition,* 90: 95-105, 2009)



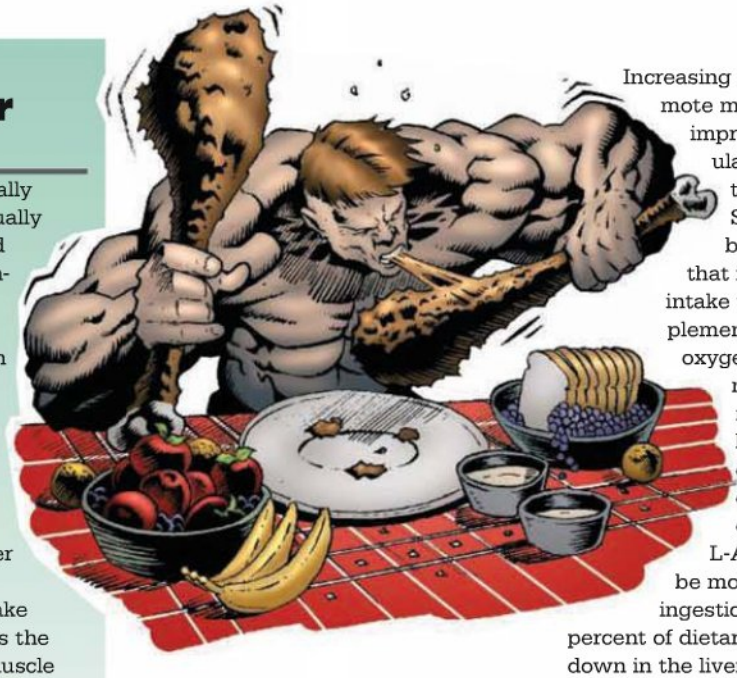
By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Muscles Need Amino Acids for Growth

Muscle mass declines gradually after age 40. Muscle loss eventually leads to decreased strength and quality of life. Muscle is in a constant state of synthesis and breakdown, and requires adequate protein intake to maintain size, even when overloaded through weight training. Amino acids that make up proteins serve as chemical signalers and building blocks for muscle proteins.

Stuart Phillips from McMaster University summarized how weight training and protein intake cause muscle growth. Leucine is the key amino acid for turning on muscle protein synthesis (mTOR pathway), but muscle hypertrophy grinds to a halt without the full complement of essential amino acids. Following intense resistance exercise, muscle protein synthesis occurs in direct proportion to protein intake, peaking at 20-40 grams. The mTOR pathway is most active in fast-twitch muscle fibers, which respond best to high-intensity weight training. Peak muscle growth occurs when you concentrate on these fibers by emphasizing high-stress training programs.

People over 40 are less responsive to key amino acids, so they should consume protein often during the day to maintain muscle mass and prevent atrophy (muscle breakdown). Older adults should combine weight training and adequate protein intake to preserve muscle mass as they age. (*Applied Physiology Nutrition Metabolism*, 34:403-410, 2009)



L-Arginine Boosts Oxygen Transport in the Lungs During Exercise

L-Arginine is an important amino acid for increasing nitric oxide release (NO) by the cells lining the blood vessels. NO helps regulate blood flow. Increasing NO levels could promote muscle blood flow and improve the capacity to regulate blood distribution during exercise. A study from Ghent University in Belgium found that L-Arginine improved lung function during exercise in seven physically-active men. They were given L-Arginine (7.2 grams per day for 14 days) or a placebo (fake arginine). L-Arginine accelerated oxygen transport speeds in the lungs following a series of exercise bouts at 80 percent of maximum effort. L-Arginine was probably effective because it increased NO levels in the blood, which promoted pulmonary blood flow. (*Medicine Science Sports Exercise*, 41:1626-1632, 2009)

L-Arginine Has No Effect on Oxygen Delivery During Treadmill Exercise

L-Arginine is an important amino acid for increasing nitric oxide release (NO) by the cells lining the blood vessels. It is the principle ingredient in nitric oxide-boosting supplements. Increasing NO levels could promote muscle blood flow and improve the capacity to regulate blood flow distribution during exercise. Spanish researchers, led by Raul Bescos, found that increasing L-Arginine intake through diet and supplements had no effect on oxygen consumption (running economy), blood nitric oxide (nitrite), or blood lactate levels in elite-level tennis players during treadmill exercise. Intravenous L-Arginine infusion might be more effective than oral ingestion because about 40 percent of dietary L-Arginine is broken down in the liver. (*International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism*, 19: 355-365, 2009)

Leucine Regulates Cell Energy Centers In Muscle And Fat Cells

Leucine is a branched-chain amino acid that acts as a critical signaling chemical in protein synthesis. A University of Tennessee study showed that it is also important for regulating mitochondrial mass in skeletal muscles and fat cells.

Mitochondria are the energy centers of the cells that largely determine endurance capacity. They are also critical for metabolic health and regulating the rate that the body burns calories. Leucine increases the activity of genes associated with mitochondrial function. These activities promote calorie burning and could play a role in weight control. Several studies found a link between dairy food consumption and lower-body fat. This study showed that the amino acid leucine, which is found in high concentrations of these foods, might be the reason for the link between dairy foods and reduced body fat. (*Nutrition & Metabolism, online journal*; 6:26, 2009)

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Low-Carbohydrate Diet Reduced Heart Disease Risk Factors Best

Until recently, people reported directly to dietary advisers when they were enrolled in weight-loss programs. The counselor provided encouragement and gave advice about diet and exercise. Modern communication technology makes direct contact less necessary. A German study measured the effect of low-carbohydrate and low-fat, calorie-restricted diets on weight loss and heart disease risk factors in a program involving telephone and computer dietary counseling. Weight loss was similar at six and 12 months into the diets. The low-carbohydrate group showed the greatest changes in heart disease risk factors such as triglycerides, HDL cholesterol, waist circumference, and systolic blood pressure. Both groups gained weight between 6 and 12 months, which showed that long-term compliance was a significant problem. (*Cardiovascular Diabetology, online journal;* 8: 36, 2009)

Antioxidants Important For Semen Quality

Reactive oxygen species, such as oxygen ions, free radicals, and peroxides, are produced naturally during metabolism. They can be highly destructive, and damage cell membranes and DNA. Substances called antioxidants that are produced naturally by the body and consumed in the diet can neutralize reactive oxygen species and protect vital cells. Spanish researchers showed that the antioxidant content of the blood was related to semen quality. They found that men who ate large amounts of meat and full-fat dairy products had lower semen quality, while those who ate more fruits and vegetables had better-quality semen. They also commented that environmental toxins are also compromising reproductive health. (*Fertility and Sterility, in press*; published online May 2009)

Amino Acids Regulate Gene Expression

Most bodybuilders take protein and amino acids supplements because amino acids are the building blocks of proteins, and are necessary for increasing muscle size. New breakthroughs in biochemistry showed that key amino acids, such as leucine, are important regulators of genes that control protein synthesis and metabolism at rest and during exercise.

French researchers, in a review of literature, concluded that key amino acids are important for coordinating processes within the genes that direct protein synthesis. Poor nutrition and inadequate amino acid intake, occurring during aging, starvation, or trauma, can lead to muscle wasting and physical deterioration. Ensuring adequate nutrition can keep these amino acids at optimal levels and help ensure metabolic health. (*Biofactors*, published online May 2009)

Taurine Increases Strength and Protects Muscle Cells

Taurine is an amino acid that helps regulate cell fluid balance, protects cells against reactive oxygen species, stabilizes cell membranes, decreases inflammation, and helps regulate cell electrolytes (i.e., calcium ion). It is found in high concentrations in nerve and muscle cells. It is also a prominent ingredient in many energy drinks and bodybuilding supplements. However, few studies have examined its effectiveness in improving athletic performance or increasing strength or muscle mass.

An Australian study using rats subjected to high-frequency electrical stimulation found that supplementing taurine increased muscle taurine levels by 40 percent and muscle strength by 4.2 percent. It also reduced F-isoprostane production— a sensitive measure of cell membrane breakdown by reactive oxygen species (highly-reactive chemicals produced naturally during metabolism). The study showed that taurine increased strength and protected muscle during intense stimulation. (*Journal Of Applied Physiology,* 107: 144-154, 2009)



By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Testosterone plus Growth Hormone Increases Muscle Mass and Physical Performance

Muscle mass decreases 20 percent between ages 40 and 60, and things go downhill from there. Many aging men take testosterone and growth hormone supplements to preserve muscle and bone mass and to improve the quality of life.

Fred Sattler from the Department of Medicine at the University of Southern California and colleagues found that testosterone and growth hormone supplements increased lean mass, upper and lower body strength, and endurance in a study involving 122 older men (average age 71 years). The treatment increased blood pressure slightly, but other side effects were minor and reversible. This study presents more evidence of the beneficial effects of hormone replacement therapy in aging adults. These supplements prevent many of the negative affects of aging and improve the quality of life. (*Journal Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 94:1991-2001, 2009)



Growth Hormone Important for High-Intensity Endurance Capacity

Growth hormone is an important hormone in adults because it stimulates protein synthesis and regulates fat and carbohydrate metabolism. GH works mainly by increasing IGF-I levels in the liver. Surprisingly, few studies have shown that GH supplements increase athletic performance.

A Danish study showed that growth hormone was critical during high-intensity endurance exercise. During the 16-day experiment, they blocked the effect of growth hormone using a growth hormone antagonist called pegvisomant. Blocking GH had no effect on maximal oxygen consumption, but decreased endurance time during a high-intensity exercise bout to exhaustion. Pegvisomant had no effect on fat metabolism during exercise.

This study showed that growth hormone plays a vital role in determining endurance exercise capacity at high intensities. It did not determine whether growth hormone supplements would improve athletic performance. (*Journal Clinical Endocrinology Metabolism*, in press; published online June 23, 2009)

Are Your Supplements Contaminated?

More sports than ever are subject to anti-doping regulations. Sports are so competitive that athletes will do whatever is necessary to succeed. While most athletes obey the anti-doping regulations, almost all use 'legal' performance-enhancing supplements. These include creatine, branched-chain amino acids, HMB, caffeine, 'mental enhancers,' and pseudoephedrine—alone or in combination. Many of the supplements are contaminated with substances prohibited by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Swiss researchers analyzed 103 dietary supplements bought on the Internet. Three of the products contained anabolic steroids and 14 contained prohormones banned by WADA. Two of the creatine products contained nandrolone metabolites.

Ron Maughan and co-workers from the UK demonstrated how easy it is to get popped in a drug test. They gave subjects mixtures of small amounts of nandrolone (1.0, 2.5, or 5.0 micrograms) with creatine and a quart of water and measured urinary output for a nandrolone metabolite for 24 hours. Nandrolone showed up in the first two urine samples.

The doping regulations for amateur and professional sports state that athletes are responsible for what they put in their bodies. Unwittingly taking a contaminated supplement is no excuse. If you are subject to drug testing, choose supplements guaranteed free of banned substances. (*Medicine Science Sports Exercise,* 41:766-72, 2009)

Growth Hormone Supplements Might Speed Fracture Healing

Bone is the primary structural element of the body. Bone provides a strong framework for the body, protecting vital organs such as the brain, spinal cord, heart, and lungs. In addition, bones act as levers for skeletal muscles. Bone fractures can be extremely debilitating or even life threatening. Fracture healing is often a long, painful process that can reverse training gains by months or years.

A review of literature by British scientists concluded that growth hormone (GH) supplements might speed things up. Following a fracture, cells called osteoblasts produce new bone and osteoclasts absorb and remove injured bone. GH increases the activity of both

Illustrated by Jerry Beck/www.ironasylum.com

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

cells and improves their coordination. While we know that GH promotes healing, we don't know the optimal dose, timing, or best method of administration. Also, we don't know enough about the safety of GH supplements to give them to critically-ill patients. (*Expert Opinion on Investigational Drugs*, 18: 887-911, 2009)

Insulin Resistance Makes Ecstasy More Dangerous

The party drug 'ecstasy' can increase body temperature to dangerous levels and trigger heat stroke, which can cause irreversible organ damage and death. Ecstasy increases body temperature because of chemicals called uncoupling proteins, such as UCP-3. Metabolism works through a series of 'coupled' chemical reactions where energy released in one reaction is captured to drive another chemical reaction. Substances called uncoupling proteins interfere with these reactions so that the released energy appears as heat instead of usable energy— a process called thermogenesis. Ecstasy can increase body temperature to lethal levels because it triggers UCP-3s to promote heat production.

A Virginia Commonwealth University study showed that insulin-resistant rats showed greater increases in body temperature in response to ecstasy. If these results apply to humans, ecstasy is more dangerous in people with poor metabolic health. Ecstasy is a dangerous drug that can cause serious, deadly heat injury, particularly in people with diabetes or insulin resistance. (*European Journal of Pharmacology,* 615: 257-261, 2009)

The Downside of Legalizing Marijuana

State budgets are in the tank across the country. Several states, such as California, have legalized marijuana for medicinal purposes. Legislators across the country are considering legalizing pot for adults and taxing it to boost state revenues. Entertainers such as Bob Dylan and Cheech and Chong have romanticized pot, making most people think that it is a fairly harmless drug.

Several health groups claim that legalizing the drug could be opening a Pandora's box. Chronic use of marijuana could be dangerous for developing teenage brains and increase the risk of mental diseases such as schizophrenia. While marijuana is not as addictive as cocaine or heroin, it can pose a challenge for people trying to kick the habit. Others claim that marijuana is a benign drug, compared to legalized substances such as alcohol and tobacco, and it is less addictive than prescription drugs such as Xanax.

The debate over legalizing marijuana will prove to be a political donnybrook, even in these financially trying times. (*The New York Times*, July 19, 2009)

Are Steroids Addictive?

Anabolic steroids increase muscle mass, strength, power, and sports performance. They are extremely effective when combined with scientifically-designed training programs. They give athletes an edge. Do athletes get addicted to steroids or are they addicted to winning?

A review of literature by Italian researchers concluded that the scientific literature contains no documented case of steroid dependence at therapeutic doses. Athletes may get hooked on the success that steroids bring, but they are not hooked on the drugs themselves. However, steroids present a hidden danger that encourages long-term use. Steroids reduce natural testosterone production, so that bodybuilders end up replacing physiologically-produced testosterone with expensive testosterone they buy on the street. They must use high doses of steroids to produce effective results. Going off the drugs results in losses of hard-made gains. (*Internal Emergency Medicine*, 4: 286-296, 2009)

Myostatin Inhibition Boosts Physical Performance

Myostatin prevents muscles from getting too big. Inhibiting myostatin might be a way to prevent muscle loss during aging. Muscle mass decreases with age, a condition called sarcopenia, which decreases strength, mobility, quality of life, and metabolic health. Sarcopenia increases the risk of disease, falls, and loss of personal freedom. Myostatin decreases muscle mass and is critical for muscle turnover that occurs constantly in resting and exercising muscle.

Scientists from the Pfizer Global Research & Development Laboratory in Connecticut, in a study on aging mice, found that the combination of a myostatin blocker and exercise increased physical fitness, whole-body metabolic rate, and insulin sensitivity (a measure of blood sugar regulation). The treatment had no effect on muscle mass. Myostatin blockers will undoubtedly be popular with bodybuilders and other weight-trained athletes, but their effects on athletic performance and the risk of injury are unknown. (*Journal Gerontology: A Biol Sci Med Sci.*, in press; published online May 29, 2009)



By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

Viagra Does Not Improve Exercise Performance In Trained Men or Women

Before the Olympics in Beijing, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) considered adding the erection-promoting drug Viagra (sildenafil) to its banned substance list. Several years ago, Ann Friedlander and colleagues from Stanford University showed that Viagra improved exercise capacity at altitude but not at sea level. This set off a frenzy in the athletic world, which led to the widespread use of the drug in diverse sports such as cycling and baseball.

A study from Stanford University and the University of Miami showed that Viagra (50 mg) had no effect on exercise performance or oxygen saturation at altitude in trained male and female cyclists during a 6-kilometer time trial. Viagra does not improve physical performance, particularly at sea level, and should not be included on WADA's banned substance list. (*Paper presented at the American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting,* June 2009)

Business Is Limp in 'Gentlemen's' Clubs

The economic slump brought hard times to the nation's strip clubs. Several years ago, these adult entertainment businesses were raking in the cash and expanding across the country. The recession put an end to that. Horny, but financially-strapped men are less likely to shell out big bucks for lap dances and strippers.

Income was down nearly 8 percent during the first quarter of 2009, and the clubs are cutting back on advertising and personnel. Las Vegas clubs have upped the bounty they pay cabbies that bring them customers. Many clubs cut drink prices and began serving inexpensive meals to attract more business. During boom times, club owners said their business was recession-proof. They were wrong. (*The Wall Street Journal*, June 11, 2009)

Lube and Sex Toy Sales Up During The Recession

You might not be able to afford a fancy vacation or a candlelight dinner at a fancy French restaurant, but you can afford some hot sex in your own bedroom. Sales of automobiles and real estate are in the tank, but gross receipts from the sale of personal lubricants have soared into the stratosphere. Johnson & Johnson reported increased sales of $41.2 million for K-Y Yours & Mine lubes. Durex and Trojan reported that condom sales were up 74 percent. Sex products are a $1 billion industry. Mainstream companies are trying to bring sex into the supermarket and making a big score. (*Advertising Age,* May 25, 2009)



Illustrated by Jerry Beck/www.ironasylum.com

Nanoparticles for Treating ED

Nanoparticles are microscopic objects that release drugs and hormones. A paper presented at the American Urological Association Annual Meeting showed that nanoparticles suspended in a gel could be rubbed on the penis and promote erections by releasing nitric oxide directly into its blood supply. The cells lining the blood vessels release nitric oxide to increase blood flow. Drugs such as Viagra trigger nitric oxide release throughout the body, which produces uncomfortable side effects. The effects of the nanoparticles are limited to the penis. They can promote erections at lower levels of the drug. Nanoparticles are not ready for primetime but will prop up the hard-ons of the future. (*ScienceDaily*, April 30, 2009)

Porno Video Secrets Revealed

Porn is a $13 billion a year industry. CNBC's documentary "Porn: The Business of Pleasure" presented some basic information about the ins and outs of the porno film business. Americans are obsessed with porn. Every second, 28,000 Internet users sign onto a porn website. Adult filmmakers crank out a new porno video every 34 minutes.

The business is dominated by sev-

By Steve Blechman and Thomas Fahey, EdD

eral porno kingpins, including Vivid Entertainment and Paul Little, the self-styled "Dirtiest man in America." Several female entrepreneurs have entered the business, but it appears they missed the boat. Porno film sales were down 50 percent last year, mainly due to the ready availability of free porno films on the Internet. People love to watch other people have sex, so the business will remain viable for many years to come. (*New York Post*, July 15, 2009)

Understanding Female Sexual Desire Disorder

Nearly 50 percent of women suffer from hypoactive sexual desire disorder (HSDD), characterized by low sexual desire, dryness, pain during intercourse, and abnormal menstrual cycles. James Pfaus from Concordia University in Canada identified the centers in the brain that control sexual desire. Excitatory systems in the brain (i.e., hypothalamus and limbic system) stimulate sexual desire. Hormones such as melanocortin, testosterone, oxytocin, and norepinephrine activate these centers and cause sexual stimulation and boost sexual desire. Brain opioids, cannabinoids, and serotonin systems cause sexual inhibition and prevent the activation of excitatory systems.

New sex drugs will activate dopamine secretion in the hypothalamus and blunt cannabinoid and serotonin release. Most likely, these will be popular recreational drugs of the future. (*Journal Sexual Medicine*, 6: 1506-1533, 2009)

Most Guys Prefer Average-Shaped Women

Soft-porn magazines such as *Playboy* and *Penthouse* are full of large-breasted women with small waists and curvaceous butts. While men love to look at these photos, they are not the kind of women they prefer.

An Australian study of the body preferences of 100 men showed that most guys prefer women with normal body shapes. They were shown 201 line drawings of female torsos with different size hips, waists, and shoulders. Overwhelmingly, the men chose torsos of average-shaped women. The men also gravitated toward average body shapes when shown photos of *Playboy* centerfolds, Australian escorts, and average Australian women. The study showed that a large gap exists between sexual fantasy and reality. (*New Scientist*, June 13, 2009)

Premature Ejaculation May Be A Genetic Disorder

Premature ejaculation (PE) is the most significant sexual problem in men— more prevalent than erectile dysfunction, low sex drive, delayed or inhibited orgasm, or physical abnormalities of the penis. It affects more than 30 percent of men and is psychologically traumatic for men and women. Men feel sexually inadequate and less masculine. PE destroys self-confidence and can ruin current and future relationships. Psychological counseling and numbing gels are the most common treatments, but neither method works very well.

A Finnish study found that PE is partly a genetic disorder. They studied 3,946 twins and their brothers. When one twin had PE, the other twin was more likely to suffer from the problem than an older or younger brother (identical twins have the same genes). Scientists might be able to develop drugs that can influence the genes controlling ejaculation. (*International Journal of Impotence Research,* 21: 62-67, 2009)



Fatattack

By Dan Gwartney, M.D.

OLYMPIA Fat-Loss Stack

In this month's 'Testosterone' column, many of the anabolic agents used to create extreme muscular hypertrophy are discussed— the 'Olympia Anabolic Stack.' This article refers to the agents used to pare down subcutaneous body fat to absolute minimal levels. The mechanisms used to achieve this goal are as varied as they are for building muscle bulk and include familiar, as well as exotic, options.

As stated in the 'Olympia Anabolic Stack,' this discussion is meant to illuminate some of the happenings in the shadows; it does not condone, support, or imply these agents can be used safely or legally as described. It also does not minimize the efforts and discipline of the professional bodybuilder, nor should it debase the socially-positive motivation these men provide to their fans and the public.

Fat loss is a goal that has escaped most Americans, as the rates of obesity escalate. Yet, for decades, bodybuilders of all races and nationalities have demonstrated that it is possible to achieve body fat percentages in the low-to-mid single digits. The disparity between the burgeoning midline of the public versus the lean abdomens of the Olympians begs for an explanation, in the hope that the experiences of these men might open therapeutic avenues of research. Sadly, the politics involved and social stigma attached to the exhibition sport of bodybuilding impedes any such melding.

The basis for reaching a non-age adjusted body fat percentage of 3 percent or less is founded first and foremost on disciplined dieting.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

Nobody gets lean without controlling their calorie intake— regardless of drugs, surgery, and exercise. Contestants on the television reality show "The Biggest Loser" lost tremendous amounts of weight in a relatively short period; sadly, the producers focused on the more exciting exercise routines and emotional drama rather than the boring diet plans.

Exercise is no chump-change player when it comes to fat loss, and professional bodybuilders know it well. They typically exercise from 75 to 180 minutes a day, if one includes posing and morning low-intensity cardio as part of their exercise regimen.

One needs to bear in mind that the extreme amount of skeletal muscle developed places an equivalent metabolic demand. Sports commentators were in awe of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps' reported daily intake of roughly 10,000 calories, which he managed to burn through the many hours of swimming, aided by his youthful metabolism. Professional bodybuilders may consume 4,000 to 5,000 calories a day at various phases of contest preparation. Obviously, as they close on the contest date, bodybuilders pare those calories down and manipulate the macronutrient intake. During the last few days leading up to a show, a 260-pound bodybuilder may reduce his calories down to 1,300 to 1,500; some continue to consume as many as 3,000 or more.

Many recreational athletes diet and train with similar intensity and discipline, but fail to come even close to the 'peeled' appearance of the Olympia contestants. The difference lies in genetics and drugs. People need to remember that these men represent the 'best of the best' in those departments. The ability to respond to the conditions applied to the body (diet, training, drugs, etc.) depends heavily on the individual's unique genetic predisposition.[1] The role of genes as the final determinant of potential makes the allure of gene-doping almost irresistible for elite athletes in all sports, something the World Anti-Doping Agency is already preparing to face.[2]

As of now, there is no documented or proven way to buy new physique-enhancing genes in humans. Every year, some adolescent television comedy dusts off the worn-out line, "You can't pick your parents, but you can pick your nose." In a few years, gene doping may change that— hopefully retiring that tired punchline.

In the absence of having perfect genes, aspiring titans resort to drugs to trigger metabolic reactions. In bodybuilding, the desired reactions are increasing muscle size and decreasing subcutaneous fat and total fat mass.

'Tried-and-True' Drugs for Fat Loss

As with anabolic agents, there are 'tried-and-true' drugs that are used almost universally among bodybuilders, and others that are less well known due to the secretive and competitive nature of the culture. Surprisingly, few bodybuilders use prescription fat-loss drugs. This is because most approved prescription weight-management drugs rely on appetite suppression or reducing nutrient absorption.[3] Non-specific weight loss reduces lean mass as well, a detriment to size and strength. Bodybuilders are focused on building and maintaining muscular mass— a catabolic, hypocaloric diet would harm their chances at competitive success.

Instead, bodybuilders look for drugs that accelerate the metabolic rate, increase thermogenesis, affect nutrient partitioning, stimulate lipolysis, reduce adipocyte differentiation or survival, or reduce extracellular water.

Obesity is not a 21st-century condition. Physicians, shamans, and pitchmen have been offering 'cures' for obesity for centuries. Among the early treatments was organ consumption, specifically eating thyroid tissue from pigs, cattle, etc.[4] Thyroid hormone regulates the rate at which nutrient-based substrates (calories) are shuttled through the mitochondria to generate heat and ATP— cellular energy. People suffering from thyroid disorders (low concentrations of active thyroid hormone) tend to be easily fatigued, intolerant to cold, and gain weight. Conversely, conditions of excess result in weakness, tremors, insomnia, intolerance to heat, and weight loss. This weight loss is generic, not specific to adipocytes— resulting in the loss of skeletal muscle mass, as well as body fat.

Of course, a bodybuilder using a variety of anabolic drugs is protected against the muscle-wasting effects of hyperthyroidism, but obese patients prescribed supraphysiologic dosages of thyroid often demonstrate weakness and loss of lean mass.[5] Among bodybuilders, the favored drug is Cytomel— synthetic T3 which is many times more active than the commonly-prescribed Synthroid (levothyroxine— T4).[6] Other thyroid hormone analogs exist, but none have shown sufficient specificity for fat loss to be used in the treatment of obesity. The risk of heart rhythm disturbances has caused this therapy to fall into disfavor.

Also embedded in ancient practices of more primitive cultures is the use of ephedrine and similar compounds.[7] Originally sourced from plants, ephedrine and related alkaloids increase the sympathetic state of an individual. Sympathetic tone refers to the balance of excitement versus relaxation from the point of view of the nervous system. When sympathetic tone is elevated, such as when one takes ephedrine/caffeine, the body acts as though it is on high alert— the 'fight or flight' mechanism.

During such events, whether caused by immediate danger or a chemical stimulus, adrenaline and adrenaline-like chemicals flood the receptors on the muscles, fat cells, brain, liver, etc. The net result is increased muscle rigidity and activity, greater calorie burning, fat release from fat cells, and generally a reduction in appetite.

This class of drugs, called sympathomimetics, also has the added benefits of reducing fatigue perception, increasing force generation, boosting alertness and pep, lowering the perceived need for sleep, and improving certain mental/cognitive functions. Generally safe, they carry a risk of

tremors, emotional irritability, irregular heartbeat, insomnia, high blood pressure, etc.[8]

Ephedrine and caffeine in combination remains very popular, even with the restrictions against ephedrine/pseudoephedrine purchase. These two chemicals can be used in the production of methamphetamine.[9] There is certainly good reason for ephedrine/caffeine's popularity— it is very effective and does not impair performance or muscular growth.[10] In fact, it may even aid in building strength and size to a slight degree.

More potent drugs exist for stimulating the beta-adrenergic pathway, including asthma medications. It is interesting how many Olympic athletes, Tour de France cyclists, etc. are being treated for 'asthma.'[11] Beta-agonist inhalers expand the airways, allowing performance athletes to breathe easier and resist fatigue. Used chronically, certain beta-agonists can stimulate receptors on the fat cell to release stored fat, and simultaneously stimulate skeletal muscle to increase the rate and percentage of fat calories burned, even at rest.

Clenbuterol, GH, and Sodium Depletion

The reigning king in this category is clenbuterol. The downside to clenbuterol is that it rapidly loses effectiveness due to receptor downregulation, necessitating a near day-to-day cycling of the drug.[12] Further, side effects including tremor, nervousness, irregular heartbeat, and other conditions may emerge at the dose required for significant effect.[13] Surprisingly, there has not been much in the way of novel agents in this drug category, with the exception of formoterolol, which does not have sufficient reported experience to comment upon, relative to illicit fat-loss use.

Still rooted in the early years of the prior century, one comes across the story of 2,4-dinitrophenol (DNP) as a weight-loss drug.[14] According to reports, workers exposed to DNP dust in munitions factories, pesticide manufacturing, etc., were experiencing weight loss, easy fatigue, fever, and death.[15] It was discovered that this chemical is capable of easily traversing the membrane barrier of the mitochondria (the part of a cell where energy in the form of ATP is produced), uncoupling calorie burning from energy production.[16] In very small, measured doses, DNP can accelerate fat loss by ramping up calorie burning by 30 percent or greater (resting energy expenditure), but at the cost of generating a tremendous heat burden and oxidative damage.

Forewarned of the historical risk associated with this chemical and the recent deaths in young adults using the drug for bodybuilding or weight-loss purposes, many professionals are still using DNP from time to time.[17] It is relatively easy to spot the chronic DNP user, with characteristic breath and a yellowish tinge to the complexion that is different from the yellowing caused by jaundice.

Human growth hormone (GH) was originally viewed as an anabolic drug, due in part to its role in the growth and development of children, and its defining name. However, as most professionals of the mid-to-late 1980s to mid-1990s learned, at anabolic concentrations in adults, it causes a variety of disfiguring and potentially harmful side effects. However, and fortunately for aging adults, at a lower dose (2-3 IU/day), GH can still provide significant fat-loss effect and aid in soft tissue recovery.[18] The fat-loss effect of GH occurs at the level of the fat cell, but care needs to be taken— as exceeding the marginal dose can induce insulin resistance/glucose intolerance (pre-diabetes), and stimulates the liver to pump glucose into the bloodstream.

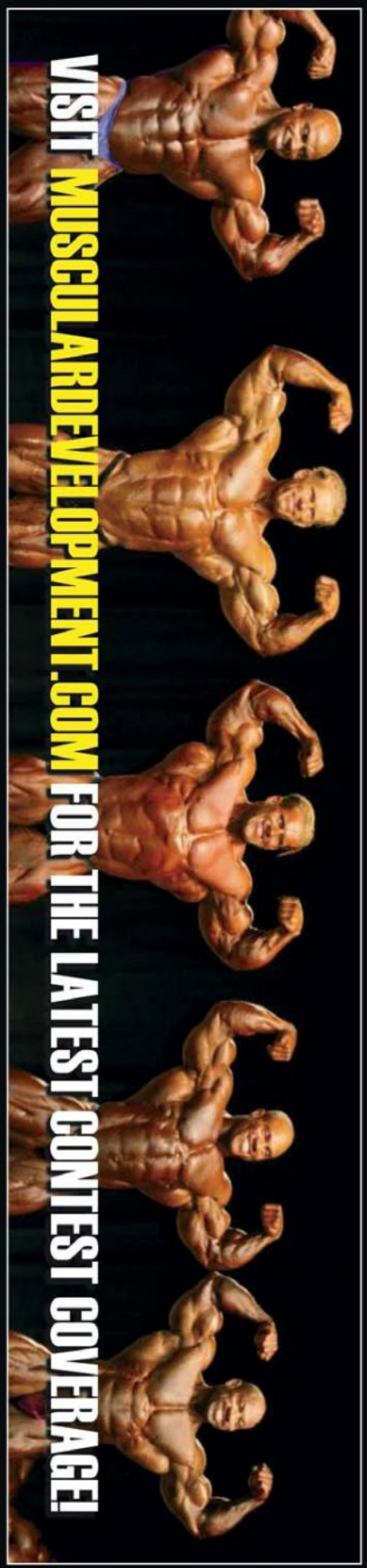
There is a little-explored path in the fat cell that involves cortisol and estrogen. Two enzymes are present in the fat cell, 11beta-HSD and aromatase. 11beta-HSD activates cortisol in fat cells. High intracellular cortisol levels increase the conversion of testosterone to estradiol (estrogen).[19] By using aromatase inhibitors, bodybuilders reduce the fat storage-promoting increase of estrogen, second-





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ary to supraphysiologic anabolic steroid use. The primitive drug, Cytadren (aminoglutethimide), was originally used by bodybuilders to lower cortisol levels, but aminoglutethimide is a non-specific drug that blocks production of several steroid hormones, including estrogen.[20]

Fat cells are derived from the same precursor cells as muscle. It may not surprise some to learn that androgenic anabolic steroids divert these precursor cells from becoming fat cells to skeletal muscle differentiation.[21] Some might think it would require a particularly potent steroid, such as trenbolone or oxymetholone, but the effect is seen with elevated testosterone concentration. There are no reports of bodybuilders using other drugs to alter the balance of precursor cell differentiation, perhaps due to the ability of bodybuilders to achieve near-absolute 'leanness.'

It is important to acknowledge the role of diuretics in bodybuilding. Bodybuilders utilize carbohydrate depletion-loading to increase intracellular water, along with synthol or related site-enhancement drugs. Sodium depletion, drinking distilled water, etc., are tools of the drug-free athlete. For the top pros, the more predictable and potent powers of diuretics are used. The 'big daddy' is Bumex (bumetanide), but many use spironolactone in conjunction, to preserve potassium.[22] The risk involved with diuretics is serious, and likely account for some of the episodes of relentless cramping and heart palpitations that have been witnessed. Diuretics may also have played a role in the competition-associated deaths that have occurred in professional bodybuilding.[23]

The Pinnacle of Fat Loss?

Bodybuilders have reached the pinnacle of fat loss— for the most part. Timed correctly, the top amateur and professional competitors can present themselves with such low levels of subcutaneous body fat that cross-striations and vascularity are evident from 10 rows back— even at rest. This success keeps the demand for more potent fat-reducing techniques low. Thus, there are no reliable reports of bodybuilders seeking out anti-sense therapy, or even mesotherapy to gain an advantage. It is possible that someone has sought out some exotic therapy or surgical technique, but for the most part, bodybuilders are much more interested in experimenting with anabolic drugs/biologics— as any additional competitive advantage in fat loss would be minimal. ■

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Supplement Performance

By Robbie Durand, M.A
Senior Web Editor.

Sugar-Free Red Bull Bites the Dust, Polyethylene Glycosylated Creatine Improves Performance

Red Bull is in everyone's hands these days—adults, teens, and kids. It's as if Red Bull has replaced water! Red Bull now has a sugar-free version that sold 3.5 billion cans in 143 countries. One sugar-free Red Bull contains 80 milligrams of caffeine, around the same as a normal cup of brewed coffee. Sugar-free Red Bull is on banners at the all the sports events because, "It gives you wings…" If 3.5 billion cans were sold, it has to increase sports performance— right?

Not according to a recent study in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research,* which reported that sugar-free Red Bull bit the dust. Seventeen young students (nine men, eight women; average age 22) who were performing regular physical activity (i.e., running, cycling, and weightlifting two to five times a week) were recruited for the 'Sugar Free Red Bull study.' Subjects consumed sugar-free Red Bull or an identical placebo, one hour before a run on the treadmill, until exhaustion— at a speed and grade corresponding to 80 percent of their individual maximum peak aerobic capacity.

Results of the study showed that sugar-free Red Bull led to no significant difference in time-to-exhaustion between groups. The researchers suspected that sugar-free Red Bull had no effect on performance due to the lack of carbohydrates in the drink, as a number of studies have shown an *increase* in time-to-exhaustion when combining caffeine and carbohydrates.

Another interesting tidbit was that researchers suspected that low amounts of taurine in sugar-free Red Bull (1.0-1.9 grams) did not enhance performance, as previous studies that used higher dosages (2-6 grams) of taurine may have impacted the result. Based on the study, sugar-free Red Bull is not going to "give you wings" like the ads claim.

Polyethylene Glycosylated Creatine Improves Performance— Without Increases In Water Retention

Some people have claimed that creatine makes them bloated or cramp, but the research does not validate these claims. If you are one of those people who feel regular creatine monohydrate makes you feel bloated, then you may want to consider combining creatine and polyethylene glycosylate (PEG).

A previous study found that combining creatine and polyethylene glycosylate may help to increase the absorption and uptake efficiency of creatine into muscle cells. PEG is believed to enhance the gastrointestinal absorption of creatine by increasing permeability coefficients in the GI tract. In sum, PEG theoretically could increase intramuscular creatine concentrations at a smaller dosage, when compared with ingestion of a larger dosage of creatine monohydrate.

Researchers compared 5 grams of creatine monohydrate a day to small-dose PEG creatine hydrochloride (1.80 grams) yielding 1.25 grams of creatine per day, to a moderate-dose PEG creatine hydrochloride yielding 2.50 grams of creatine per day. The researchers put the subjects through a wide range of strength and power movements such as the one-repetition maximum (1 RM) bench press, leg press, bench press to failure and leg press to failure. So what did they find at the end of the study?

All the creatine groups (creatine monohydrate, low- and moderate-dose PEG) had increases in 1 RM bench press, 1 RM leg press, and time-to-exhaustion. The low- and moderate-dose PEG groups did not experience increased body mass (water weight)— as the creatine monohydrate group did. This suggests that combining creatine and polyethylene glycosylate can increase maximal strength and repetitions to exhaustion, without increasing in water weight.

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Soy Protein— The Missing Link?

By Steve Downs, C.S.C.S.

Whey is a pure and easily-utilized source of protein. But the speed at which it is broken down and assimilated into your body for muscle-building and recovery makes it less than optimal for overall feeding of this critical macronutrient.

Research shows that whey is digested and its amino acids reach the bloodstream within 2 hours of ingestion. While this makes for an excellent post-workout protein source– ensuring fast recovery and anabolism after training–whey alone will not exhibit a proper anabolic environment for an extended period. If you only utilized whey supplements, you'd have to ingest a dose every 2 hours for maximum benefit.

Casein is another type of dairy protein that is noted for its slower breakdown in the body. It is also easily digested and assimilated, so it is a great match when ingested with whey for a longer-duration protein source. Its window of amino acid delivery lies in the 4-6 hour range after consumption, so it's far better for sustaining a long-term anabolic environment.

Research by Hall, et al. at the University of Surrey showed that casein not only releases amino acids into the body at a slower rate than whey, but also increases satiety for extended periods– an added benefit for bodybuilders on a pre-contest diet.

What about the critical 2-4 hour period between the two? What is the missing link in the protein supplementation puzzle? Fortunately, the window between whey and casein is best 'bridged' by the use of soy protein, specifically soy isolates that are specially manufactured for greatest muscle-building effect (such as Supro soy protein). This mixture exhibits unique anabolic properties, superb bioavailability and high levels of muscle-building amino acids such as glutamine, arginine and BCAAs.

The big problem with soy is its supposed 'feminizing' testosterone-lowering effects. A new research meta-analysis shows that the use of soy protein or isoflavones (active constituents in soy) does not have any negative effect on testosterone levels.

A meta-analysis by Hamilton-Reeves, et al. at St. Catherine University and the University of Minnesota set out to determine whether isoflavones (found in soy) would exert estrogen-like effects in men by lowering bioavailable testosterone. The analysis also investigated the effects of isoflavones on sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG), free testosterone and free androgen index (FAI).

The meta-analysis examined 47 research reports covering 51 treatment groups. The analysis concluded that neither soy protein nor isoflavone supplementation exerted any negative alterations on bioavailable testosterone in males, regardless of research model. The authors noted that *soy did not exert any estrogen-like effects in men, nor any lowering of testosterone levels* or other reproductive hormones.

In addition, a double-blind clinical study by Rubin, et al. at Miami Research Associates compared the effects of four different proteins with regard to hormone levels of weight-trained men. The dosing included the following protocols: 1) soy protein isolate; 2) soy protein concentrate; 3) whey blend (50/50 mixture of whey concentrate and whey protein isolate); and 4) soy/whey blend (50/50 mixture soy protein isolate and whey protein concentrate). The study concluded that the effects of soy on the testosterone to estrogen (T:E) ratio of test subjects were similar to whey alone.

Such a combination of health benefits should make the daily use of soy isolates a no-brainer. And now that the Hamilton-Reeves meta-analysis has overwhelmingly obliterated the urban myth of soy's supposed estrogen-increasing effects, inclusion of this protein source in bodybuilding nutrition is critical.

So with the three combined protein sources, you'd effectively fuel your system with one feeding every 6 hours. Nice, but not good enough– especially for nighttime, when you will be sleeping for 8 or more hours, or when you have a busy day in the 'real world' and can't eat that often. In a perfect world, you'd be able to down a protein supplement only twice a day and maximize your anabolic potential. Imagine that: 12-hour amino acid release!

Fortunately, MHP's Probolic-SR is one such product that combines the anabolic properties of whey, slower digestion of casein and incredible health-building effects of soy isolates into one super muscle-building protein supplement. But it gets even better: to ensure a 12-hour anabolic window of constant amino acid delivery, MHP's scientists created the patented Micro-Feed Technology. This pharmaceutical technology allows for the continuous release of amino acids into the system for up to 12 hours, which allows for greater anabolic effect with less protein consumption. In other words, excessive dosing of protein isn't necessary because you get the maximum muscle-building and anti-catabolic effects from Probolic-SR.

For more information about MHP's Problolic-SR product, visit getmhp.com.



Nutrition Performance

By Robbie Durand, M.A.
Senior Web Editor

OLIVE OIL & VINEGAR: Ultimate Fat-Loss Salad Dressing?

Bodybuilders getting ready for the 'big show' often use olive oil and vinegar for their health properties. What many bodybuilders don't know is that olive oil and vinegar are two potent fat-loss compounds.

Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA), which promote heart health by decreasing 'bad' LDL cholesterol without reducing 'good' HDL cholesterol. Research indicates that replacing other types of fats with monounsaturated fats, especially olive oil, helps people lose weight.

A number of studies have shown that when people substitute MUFA-rich olive oil for saturated fat, they eat less and either maintain their weight or lose weight. Several other studies indicate that monounsaturated fat enhances the body's breakdown of stored fat.

Olive Oil Increases Resting Energy Expenditure

If you have not added olive oil to your chicken or salads, you are missing out on enhanced fat loss. Olive oil is metabolized differently than other fats, as olive oil is more rapidly converted for energy use compared to fats such as vegetable oil.

Researchers at McGill University in Canada administered three types of fats at breakfast, and monitored energy expenditure and fat oxidation. The breakfast meal consisted of 60 percent fat, 30 percent carbohydrates, and 10 percent protein. The fat, which consisted of oil that was poured on an English muffin, was olive oil, sunflower oil, or flaxseed oil. At the end of the study, olive oil increased resting energy expenditure compared to the other fats.[1]

A plausible biological mechanism to explain the different biological effects of the oils is the metabolism of olive oil, which is preferentially incorporated into triglycerides, which are a ready source of energy.

Another plausible molecular mechanism is offered by animal studies, which have reported that rats fed a diet rich in olive oil— compared to a diet rich in sunflower oil— experienced an upregulation of 'uncoupling proteins,' a protein that allows heat production by uncoupling respiration from ATP synthesis— an important component of energy expenditure. The bottom line is that consuming olive oil with a meal will result in more calories burned.

Vinegar Upregulates Genes for Fat Metabolism

Vinegar has been consumed for its health properties as a folk medicine since ancient times. Scientists have discovered that the main component in vinegar, acetic acid (AcOH), has potent effects on fat metabolism. A previous study reported that AcOH suppressed body fat accumulation. The study found that AcOH regulates genes involved in glucose metabolism or lipogenesis, resulting in suppression of body fat buildup.[2]

Researchers from Japan recently investigated low- and high-dose AcOH while mice were fed a high-fat diet for 42 days. The bodyweight of mice fed a high-fat diet was significantly lower in both the high- and low-AcOH groups, compared to the control group. Interestingly, there was not a dose-dependent effect— more AcOH will not enhance fat loss compared to a lower dosage.

When researchers examined genes for fat metabolism, they discovered something really interesting. PPAR gamma, which increases fat loss, was higher after acetic AcOH in both the high- and low-dose groups. Gene expression of molecules regulating fat metabolism regulated by PPAR gamma (ACO, a rate-controlling enzyme involved in fatty acid oxidation; CPT-1 regulates fat oxidation in the mitochondria; and UCP-2, involved in thermogenesis) were elevated following AcOH ingestion.

The results of this study suggest that AcOH suppresses body fat accumulation by increasing fatty oxidation and thermogenesis (elevated calorie burning). And AcOH, the main component of vinegar, upregulates the expression of genes for fat metabolism and thermogenic proteins— such as ACO, CPT-1, and UCP-2— through a PPAR gamma-mediated pathway and suppresses accumulation of body fat.[3]

So the combination of olive oil and vinegar has potent effects on upregulating genes for fat metabolism. Don't go crazy with olive oil and vinegar, and pour a bottle on your salad thinking it's going to get you ripped overnight or compensate for a Twinkie binge. It's all about being in a 'caloric balance' when dieting for a show. A few small servings of olive oil and vinegar may be a great addition to enhance fat loss while dieting. ■

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MuscleGrowth Update

By Robbie Durand, M.A.
Senior Web Editor

Strength Training Turns on More Genes for Muscle Mass Than Power Training

I have always been amazed at the feats of strength that Olympic lifters can perform. When I was a strength coach, I remember going to Gayle Hatch's Olympic training center and seeing guys half my size do presses and squats with half the weight I could do… what an ego destroyer! The question I always wondered was— how could these guys be so strong yet they are not ***bigger***?

Olympic lifters train with all lifts very *explosively*. The vertical jumps of most Olympic lifters are out of this world… even for the super-heavy weights. Former Olympic heavyweight lifter Shane Hammond can dunk a basketball at 5'9" and 350 pounds with no steps. He can do a standing back-flip standing still. He has also jumped onto a 48" plyobox with one step. Now that's explosive power!!

I remember that bodybuilders used to walk over to the training section and stare in disbelief at how Olympic lifters did power shrugs. They generally performed them very rapidly with explosive movements, whereas the bodybuilder would lift the bar up and focus on tension.

So should a person looking to get bigger train explosively?? In physics, **power** (symbol: *P*) is the rate at which work is performed or energy is transmitted, or the amount of energy required or expended for a given unit of time. As a rate of change of work done or the energy of a subsystem, power is:

where
P is power
W is work
t is time.

Olympic lifters want to get the bar off the ground as fast as possible. Plyometrics is an excellent example of power training commonly used by Olympic lifters; the goal of plyometrics is to generate explosive power as fast as possible. Plyometrics is a type of exercise training designed to produce fast, powerful movements, and improve the functions of the nervous system, generally for the purpose of improving performance in sports. Plyometric movements, in which a muscle is loaded and then contracted in rapid sequence, use the strength, elasticity and innervation of muscle and surrounding tissues to jump higher, run faster, throw farther, or hit harder, depending on the desired training goal. Plyometrics is used to increase the speed or force of muscular contractions.

Training Variables	Strength	Power
Load (% of 1 RM)	80-90	70-90
Reps per set	1-5	1-5
Sets per exercise	4-7	3-5
Rest between sets (min.)	2-6	2-6
Duration (seconds per set)	5-10	4-8
Speed per rep (% of max)	60-100	90-100
Training sessions per week	3-6	3-6

Strength, on the other hand, is defined in theoretical terms as the maximum force of a certain movement. In practice, it is defined by the one-repetition maximum (1 RM) load of an exercise in the gym. When a powerlifter performs a maximum bench press or squat, they are performing strength training. In many cases, the aim of a strength program is simply to increase maximum strength. Athletes typically train with weights between 75 percent and 95 percent of 1 RM. If you examine the force-velocity curve of a strength movement, you will note that at the high force end of the curve, the velocity of movement is at its slowest. Now think about how an athlete lifts very heavy weights— slowly. This is because it takes time to develop maximal force within the muscle. So if your goal is to increase muscle mass, should you train explosively or train with heavier poundages?

Of Genes and Muscle Contractions…

In this month's *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science and Sports*, researchers examined key genes for muscle hypertrophy for two different types of weightlifting

protocols: strength training and power training. The researchers took previously-trained athletes and had them perform either a strength or power program for eight weeks. They took muscle biopsies before and after the end of eight weeks.

The strength group trained with intensities between 10 and 4 RM, while the power group performed lifts between 30-60 percent of a 1 RM. In sum, the strength group was using heavier weights. Remember, the power group was interested in developing explosive power by moving the weight *as fast as possible,* so they had to use a lighter weight. I always try to give practical applications when writing these articles, but how many times do you see people doing bench presses or other exercises very explosively, not emphasizing muscle contractions?

Strength Training Turns on More Genes for Muscle Hypertrophy Than Power Training

Both groups had an increase in strength, but here is the really interesting finding:

- The muscle mass of the thighs increased for both groups but *there was a tendency for greater muscle mass in the strength-training group.*
- Genes for muscle hypertrophy increased in both groups, but *there was a greater tendency for greater expression in the strength group.*

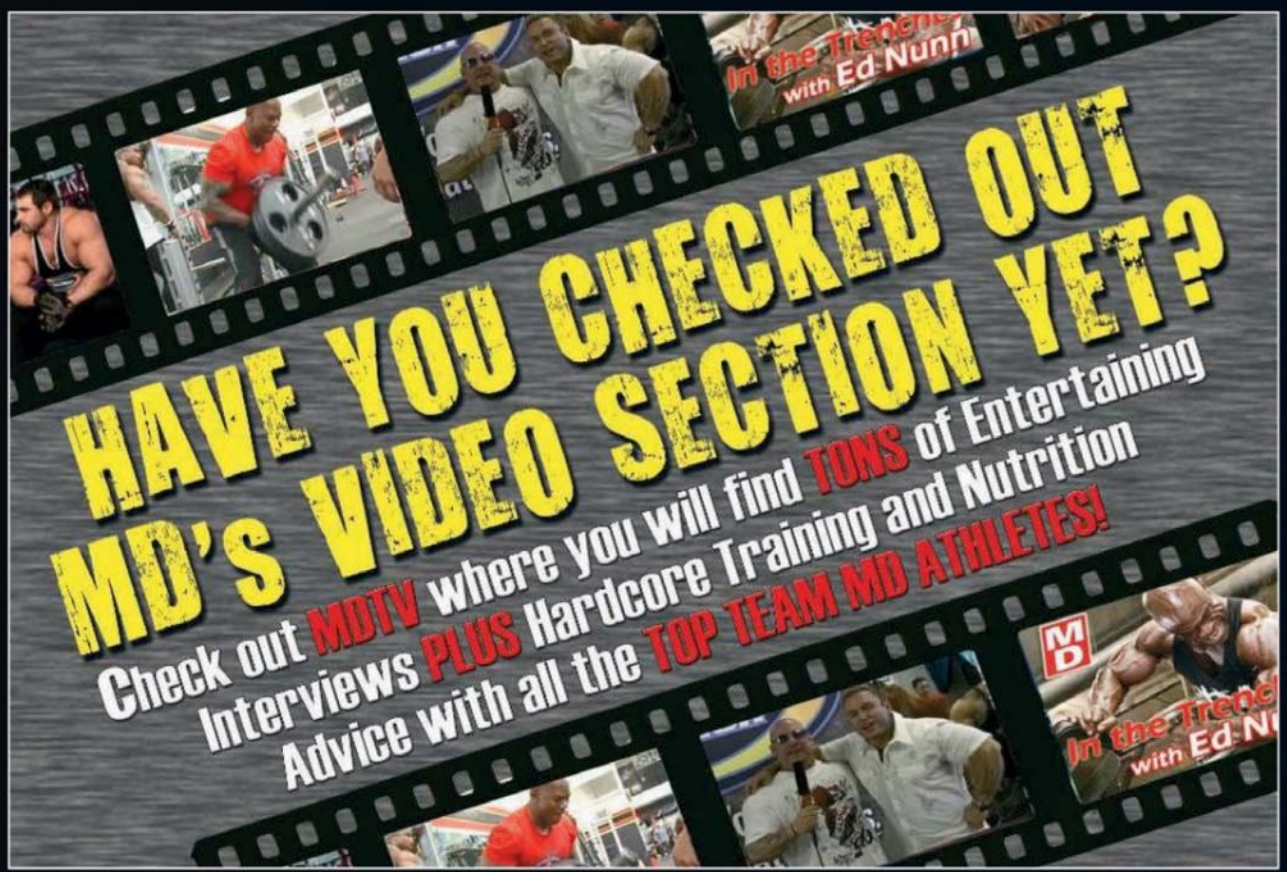
In sum, researchers found that muscle fiber hypertrophy and genes for muscle mass (mTOR, etc.) presented a trend toward a greater increase after strength training.[1] Even though eight weeks of strength and power training led to similar strength improvements, *there was a tendency toward greater gene expression and muscle fiber hypertrophy may induce higher strength gains after longer strength training periods.*

I think the practical applications of this study are that although Olympic lifts and plyometrics are great for increasing overall power, they are not going to put on size like a strength-training program. This research sheds some light on why Olympic lifters are strong as hell yet they do not have the muscle hypertrophy of most powerlifters.

When trying to put on muscle size, stick to the basics like bench presses, squats, and deadlifts. Incorporating some explosive movements into your weight-training routine is not a bad idea but remember, explosive lifting does not place much tension on the muscle due to the rapid movement of the lift. ■

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bodybuilding science

By Robbie Durand, M.A.
Senior Web Editor

Liver IGF-1: How Important Is It For Muscle Growth?

I have always been amazed at how fast the science of exercise biology is changing the way bodybuilders train. One thing I have realized is that in order to make continual gains and improve, science can be your greatest ally— but you must have an open mind. Having an open mind means being willing to accept new ideas that go against what traditional bodybuilders have preached as 'gospel' for years. The latest one is liver IGF-1.

A year ago I read that one of the main advantages of a low-carb diet was that it raised growth hormone (GH) and increased liver IGF-1. Anything that increases liver IGF-1 has to be good for bodybuilding, right? Well, that's what I thought for years. I thought that since high-intensity exercise increases GH, it also increases serum IGF-1— which is a necessity for muscle growth. More recently, I've read a few breaking science articles that go against a long-held belief that liver IGF-1 is this potent mediator of muscle growth.

Liver IGF-1: Biology

IGF-1 (insulin-like growth factor 1) was termed 'insulin-like' because of its ability to stimulate glucose uptake into fat and muscle cells. IGF-1 shares approximately 50 percent of its amino acid structure identity with insulin. There were two discoveries of IGF-1 and its effect on multiple tissues at the molecular level: the 'somatomedin hypothesis' originally stated that most, if not all, of the effects of GH were mediated by liver-derived IGF-1. It became increasingly clear that local production of IGF-1— acting either in a paracrine (on nearby cells) or autocrine (on the same cell) manner— mediated important biological effects. Many studies followed, showing that in animals that are GH deficient, systemic IGF-1 infusions lead to normal growth.

The 'somatomedin hypothesis' was revised into the 'dual effector theory,' which proposes an alternative view— involving direct effects of GH on peripheral tissues not mediated by IGF-1, and indirect effects of GH-stimulated IGF-1 produced locally at the tissue level or distant from the site of action. Direct effects of GH are increasing muscle amino acid uptake, resulting in protein synthesis, glucose output from liver (anti-insulin), fat mobilization (anti-insulin), ketogenesis in liver (anti-insulin), and IGF-1 release from liver.

Unlike insulin, circulating plasma IGF-1 concentrations appear to be independent of diurnal variation. Interestingly, IGF-1 concentrations in the serum are 1,000 times higher than those of insulin.[4] Skeletal muscle hypertrophy is mediated at least by three major molecular processes: increased protein synthesis, increased satellite cell activity, and increased gene transcription—each one contributing to a different pathway to muscle hypertrophy. Interestingly, IGF-1 influences all of these mechanisms.

If liver-derived IGF-1 is this mediator of muscle hypertrophy, how come studies examining resistance-trained men do not show changes in serum IGF-1, yet the men have increases in muscle growth? IGF-1 is a much more powerful growth activator than insulin; IGF-1 activates six times more genes associated with muscle cell development than insulin. This study showed the critical importance of IGF-1 in muscle cell development, growth, and repair.[10]

Intramuscular IGF-1: The Holy Grail for Muscle Hypertrophy?

The many molecular mechanisms (e.g., myostatin, calcineurin) for growth remain unclear, but the evidence that growth factors such as IGF-1 increase muscle hypertrophy is obvious. In a 2004 study, there was no change in resting plasma IGF-1 in response to 10 weeks of resistance exercise training— yet significant increase in muscle hypertrophy. Thus, by default, local growth (muscle IGF-1) response in muscle might be more important than circulating factors in contributing to muscle hypertrophy with resistance training.[5]

Remember, young women not using hormonal contraceptives (estrogen) have, on average, 80-fold higher median GH levels than men. Women taking oral contraceptives have 117- to 125-fold higher median GH concentrations than men. In addition, women have higher resting IGF-1 levels than men.

Marcus Bamman and colleagues conducted one of the most shocking studies of the year. The study was the first to document that contractions from maximal eccentric squats (tension overload) increased muscle IGF-1 mRNA levels and muscle androgen receptor concentration. Increased mRNA means there is increased gene activity taking place in muscle.

Interestingly, there was no change in plasma levels of IGF-1 or testosterone after the bout of exercise.[6] In rats, the overexpression of IGF-1 in muscle via transgenic rat models (genetically manipulated mice) is more effective at increasing muscle hypertrophy than exogenous IGF-1 administration.[7] Interestingly, a recent study on rats at the College of Medicine at Pennsylvania State University in Hershey found that inserting IGF-1 pellets in muscle prevented atrophy following experimentally-induced tissue infection. The pellets promoted protein synthesis and decreased protein breakdown, without releasing IGF-1 into the general circulation.[9]

It's All In the Muscle

Several other studies have been published that report gains in strength and size are related to 'intramuscular growth factors' independent of peripheral levels of hormones such as IGF-1. In an elegant study in *The Journal of Physiology,* researchers tested this hypothesis. By virtue of their experimental design, the authors were able to distinguish between the effect of muscle overload and liver IGF-1 and muscle IGF-1. As a result, they could determine the contribution of mechanical loading independently of systemic and external growth factors.

The surprise comes when the muscles of the liver IGF-1-deficient mice were challenged with an increased muscle overload. Whereas the prevailing hypothesis would predict a diminished ability to grow, the muscles of the transgenic, liver-deficient IGF-1 mice grew in response to overload and activated mTOR in muscle to the same extent as controls. This questions just how important liver-derived IGF-1 is for muscle growth. The implication is that the activation of mTOR and muscle growth is entirely dictated by the mechanical load the muscle experiences, and not from liver IGF-1 production.

Serum-Deficient IGF-1 Rats Have Increased Muscle Hypertrophy

The contribution of the GH/IGF-1 axis to skeletal muscle adaptations in response to long-term resistance training is not known. If increases in liver IGF-1 were able to increase muscle hypertrophy, why have so many studies using GH alone— which results in large increases in serum IGF— been unsuccessful at inducing muscle hypertrophy?

Overexpression or exogenous administration of IGF-1 in muscle, neither of which alter serum IGF-1, have been shown to increase muscle mass and delay the onset of age-related sarcopenia.[1-3] These data suggest that circulating IGF-1 may not be necessary for the hypertrophic response to overload.

In this month's *Journal of Experimental Biology and Medicine,* researchers examined the importance of liver-derived IGF-1 on muscle hypertrophy. They developed a 'mouse model' that was deficient in liver-derived IGF-1, yet muscle IGF-1 was fully functional. The researchers wanted to test if liver IGF-1 production was important for muscle hypertrophy in response to muscle overload.

One interesting physiological response is that if you 'knock out' liver IGF-1, the body tries to compensate by increasing GH production— so the liver-deficient IGF-1 mice had high levels of GH. Prior to exercise and at the end of exercise, the liver-deficient IGF-1 mice had an 80-85 percent reduction in serum IGF-1, compared to normal mice.

At the end of the study, the mass of the mouse quadriceps increased in liver-deficient IGF-1 mice and was normal after exercise, and there were no differences between the groups. Researchers concluded that decreased levels of serum IGF-1 in liver-deficient IGF-1 mice did not diminish weightlifting performance or muscle growth. Therefore, maximal exercise performance is not dependent on normal levels of liver circulating IGF-1.[8]

It appears unlikely that elevated GH contributes to the muscle overload growth process— since the response of muscle IGF-1 to exercise was not greater in the liver-deficient IGF-1 mice, and since GH signaling was inhibited by exercise.

Bodybuilders would be best advised not get caught up in diets that raise IGF-1, or being a big believer that serum IGF-1 is this Holy Grail for muscle hypertrophy. Based on the science, it's not panning out that way. The studies seem to point to *muscle overload* stimulating muscle IGF-1 or intramuscular IGF-1, more than liver-derived IGF-1, as being a key mediator of muscle growth. ■

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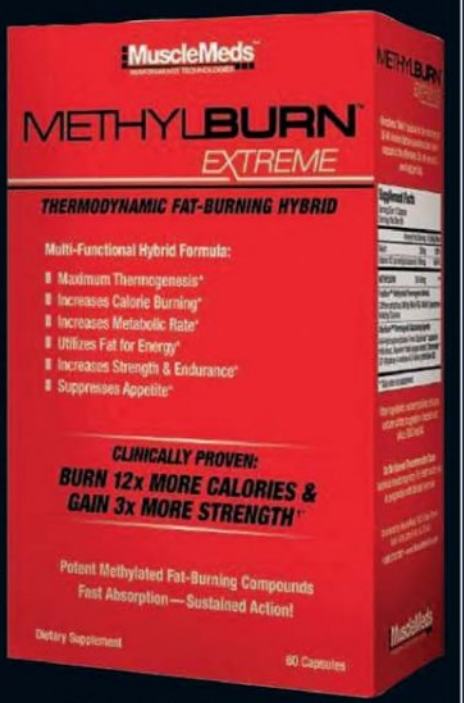
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Sports Supplement Product Review

MethylBURN Extreme THERMODYNAMIC FAT-BURNING HYBRID



If you are looking for an edge to get in your best shape ever and get much better results from your training and weight-loss program, ***MethylBURN Extreme*** is the answer. Yes, adding this new super-pill will give you significantly better fat burning and performance in the gym.

MethylBURN Extreme is designed to promote increased calorie and fat burning in an entirely new way, using advanced thermogenic fat-burning hybrid technology. Find out how this scientific breakthrough will help you finally get the lean, sculpted body you've been working for!

Multi-functional Hybrid Formula Benefits:

- Maximizes thermogenesis
- Increases calorie burning
- Increases metabolic rate
- Utilizes fat for energy
- Increases strength and endurance
- Suppresses appetite

RESEARCH-PROVEN Effects:

- 12 times more calories burned**
- 3 times more strength performance**
- ***Potent Methylated Fat-Burning Compounds***
- ***Fast Absorption – Sustained Delivery!***

MethylBURN Extreme's advanced hybrid design works on multiple pathways to facilitate maximum fat-burning effects. The key to ***MethylBURN's*** effectiveness is its unique Thermodynamic Hybrid design of synergistic and clinically-researched ingredients, which trigger potent thermogenesis, calorie burning, fat metabolism, satiety and enhanced muscle strength and performance.

MethylBURN Extreme's FastBurn Methylated Thermogenic Matrix quickly increases the release of norepinephrine to spark thermogenic fat incineration and mobilize fatty acids. This is followed by a series of synergistic fat-burning pathways via Thermogenic Sustaining Agents to further facilitate this potent fat-burning cascade. In fact, ***MethylBURN Extreme*** is so powerful, it can actually help you burn up to 12 times more calories.**

MethylBURNs technologically-advanced Oxcenerate catalyst enhances and prolongs the thermogenic cascade and metabolic pathway required for using fats for energy. This results in extreme fat-torching effects and can also triple your muscle strength endurance and performance.

MethylBURN Extreme's advanced synergistic compounds provide both fast and sustained activity to optimize fat burning, energy and power during your workouts while continuing to incinerate fat for energy after your workouts and throughout the day. No other fat burner works like ***MethylBURN Extreme*** because no other formula contains these proprietary, clinically-tested compounds and advanced hybrid design.

The MuscleMeds research team determined that there was a need to create a new type of thermogenic product, one that would incorporate the new multi-target hybrid design to not only increase thermogenesis (calorie burning), but to have vital multiple actions on the entire Thermogenic Fat-Burning Cascade. This new thermogenic product would also increase the fat-burning rate and sustain the following effects:

- Lipolysis activation
- Thermogenic stimulation
- Sustainment
- Enhance exercise performance, energy and appetite control

This formula would target the critical multiple physiological pathways involved in not only maximizing and prolonging thermogenesis, but would provide additional synergistic effects required for maximizing fat metabolism. Thus, the world's first Thermodynamic Fat-Burning Hybrid was born— ***MethylBURN Extreme!***

For more information about ***MethylBURN Extreme,*** visit ***http://www.musclemedsrx.com/*** ■

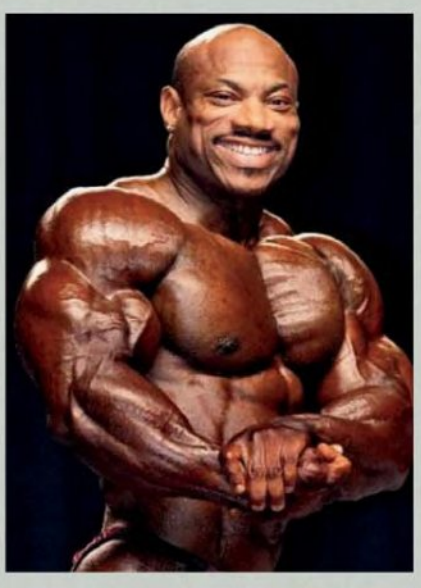
By Flex Wheeler, Photography by Per Bernal

THE 2009 MR. OLYMPIA:

HOW WILL IT GO DOWN?

Dynasties and Domination

For many of us, the Mr. Olympia contest has often been a pretty predictable show during much of our lifetimes. Throughout the **Lee Haney** years, 'Totalee Awesome' was always the odds-on favorite. Sure, he had challengers like **Rich Gaspari** and **Lee Labrada** to keep things interesting, but nobody really











thought they would take Haney out— and they never did. That theme continued with six years of **Dorian**. Again, you had some excellent bodybuilders gunning for his Olympia title. Guys like me, **Shawn**, **Kevin**, and **Nasser** pushed the big man from England hard, but the fans fully expected Dorian to hold onto his crown, which he did for six years.

Then we had eight years of **Ronnie**, a man who many felt was unbeatable for a long time. Ronnie in his prime was probably the most dominating Mr. Olympia champion of this generation. After a few years, people didn't even speculate about who might beat him. It was more like "Who do you think will be second place, and third?"

It was exciting to watch Ronnie for his sheer freakiness— what will he look like this year? But at the same time, a lot of fans found the Mr. Olympia pretty boring toward the end of his reign. How can you look forward to a show in which the winner is a foregone conclusion? (Though I guess things were worse in 1968, when **Sergio Oliva** had everyone so discouraged that nobody even showed up to even try to win the Olympia that year.)

It was said that the only man who could beat Ronnie was Ronnie, and that's pretty much exactly what happened. Once his physique began to deteriorate, the door finally swung open for someone else to walk in and grab that Sandow trophy out of his hands. Since Ronnie's last of eight consecutive wins in 2005, the Mr. Olympia has finally become a true contest, as it was meant to be from its inception in 1965. The best bodybuilders in the world come together to battle for the top title in our sport, and on any given day, any number of them could emerge triumphant. **Jay Cutler** won the O twice, and last year **Dexter** ascended to Mount Olympus after 10 years as a pro.











Year of the Question Mark

The 2009 Mr. Olympia is just around the corner, and we are in a very unique situation. For the first time ever, we legitimately have at least five men who are all equally capable of winning the title this year. Dexter and Jay have both won the Mr. Olympia recently, and **Victor Martinez**, **Kai Greene**, and **Phil Heath** are all champions with 'what it takes' to be the best in the world.

You can imagine the headache I got trying to come up with a list of the top 10 in any type of order of how they might place. I tried a few different versions and in the end gave up. I can't do that crap without a damn crystal ball and you know I don't have one of those! So instead, I decided to try to run down the top 10 guys in


2008 Mr. Olympia

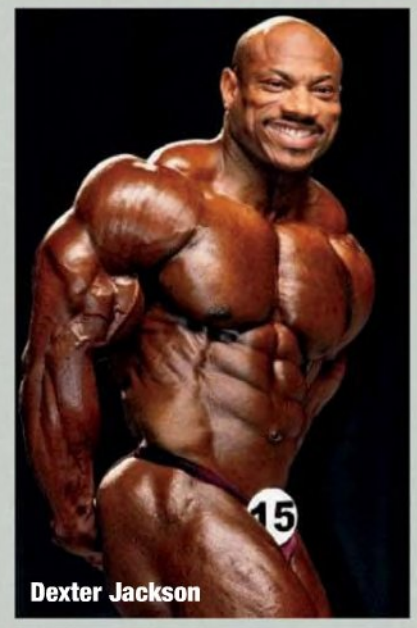
terms of their ranking.

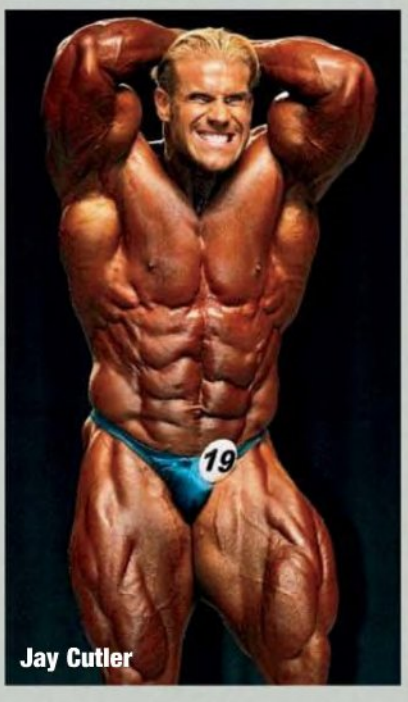
Don't go looking for some official ranking of the top pros that corresponds to it, because I made this one up, based on both how the guys have fared at recent Mr. Olympia events, as well as the last few big shows they have done. So what follows is by no means an attempt at predicting how the top 10 placings will pan out. If any of you guys can do that with a fair degree of accuracy, I would have to call you Nostradamus. And if you're that good, help me pick some stocks!

Dexter Jackson

As the reigning Mr. Olympia, Dexter is the top-ranked man and the odds-on favorite to win, even if it doesn't feel like a 'sure thing' the way it used to in the Ronnie, Dorian, and Haney eras. Many people think Dexter is destined to be a one-hit wonder like Samir Bannout or Chris Dickerson, but I disagree. He told me right after he won last year that he was happy to have one Mr. Olympia, and would be grateful if that's all he ever got. It was only a couple weeks later and the win finally sank in that he told me, "Naw, I want more!"

Dexter is so consistent with his conditioning that it would be totally bizarre if he didn't show up peeled to the bone. He hasn't done any shows since last fall, so he won't be burned out or tired. I saw him guest pose back in May at Jim Manion's Pittsburgh show. Dexter was a bit down in size because he wasn't in serious training mode yet, but he was already better conditioned than any of the other guest posers— which included just about everybody we're discussing here.


Dexter Jackson


Jay Cutler

Jay Cutler

As the 2006 and 2007 Mr. Olympia winner and last year's runner-up, Jay Cutler is the highest-ranked after Dexter. His performance this year will be a defining moment in his career, I'm sure. He can't go back in time and totally duplicate his look from 2001, which most agree was the best he's ever been. Jay carries more size now. But, what if he could regain that dry condition and tighter waist,


Kai Greene

with the size he's added? I actually think the 2001 Jay Cutler would probably have a better chance of dethroning Dexter, because the game has changed since then and it's not all about size anymore.

But I never count Cutler out. The man has shown over the course of his career that he's like a Timex watch— he takes a licking and keeps on ticking. Being in the position of the underdog is when he always shines,


2009 Arnold Classic

and now he's back in that role. I wonder what he will do if, heaven forbid, he doesn't win or even take second. If Jay takes third place or even worse, will he call it quits after 13 years in the pro ranks? Even if he did that, Jay Cutler would still go down in bodybuilding history as one of the most highly-decorated and hardest-working champions our sport has ever known.

Kai Greene

I struggled with who to go with next, and came very close to choosing Victor. But since Kai beat him earlier this season at the Arnold Classic, he comes next in my rankings. Once again, before anyone gets upset or wants to argue, these are just my own opinions. If Kai just shows up looking exactly the way he did at the Arnold, he's a definite top five pick, a probable top three, and a possible winner. Can he beat Dexter? Until we see them side by side, we can't say.

It will be Kai's first Mr. Olympia, and nobody has won this contest on his first try since Larry Scott did it in 1965. And that was the first year the show was ever held, plus he only had to beat two guys. Every other Mr. Olympia got beaten at least once before he won the title: Sergio, Arnold, Franco, Zane, Dickerson, Bannout, Haney, Yates, Coleman, Cutler, and Dexter. If Kai could win, he would certainly make bodybuilding history.


Victor Martinez

Victor Martinez

Victor managed to take a strong second place to Kai at the Arnold back in March, and that was at only 90 percent of his best and still coming back from his knee injury. What can he do at 100 percent? As with Jay, this show is going to be a test for Vic. Victor has so much talent and so many people believing in his destiny of becoming Mr. Olympia. We are all waiting for him to pull the trigger and make it happen this year— but will he?

I am confident he will look better than he did at the Arnold, because


Dennis Wolf

he's had that much more time to get back to his previous best. If Martinez shows up looking the way he did in 2007, he will be hard to handle. If he's even better than that, he'll be everyone's worst nightmare.

Dennis Wolf

From here on down, things are getting a little blurry and you could easily have some of these guys switching places in the rankings. I put Dennis Wolf here because he has taken the top five twice. Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf? I think everybody should be! We all know what happened to homeboy last year toward the end of his prep. Dennis flattened out so badly that International House of Pancakes offered to sponsor him!

He won't let that happen again. Wolf plans on being insanely shredded at 280 pounds, which would make him one of the heaviest men in the show. Many people feel Dennis Wolf can be a Mr. Olympia in time. Is his time coming sooner than some thought? I've seen him guest pose earlier this season and he has added thickness to his lower lats. It's still not a strong area for him, but Dennis has


2008 Mr. Olympia


Phil Heath

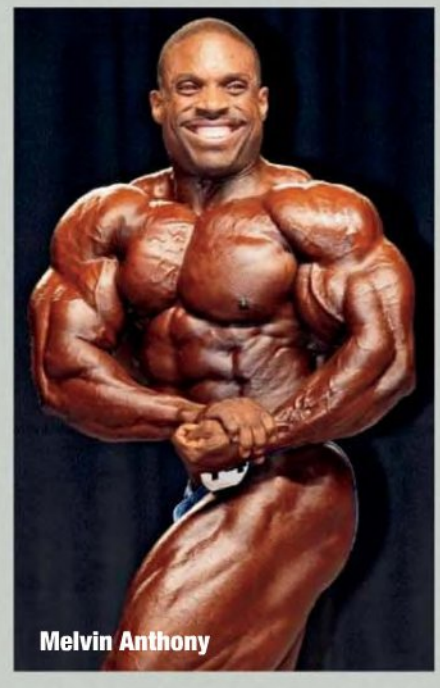
the craziest V-taper in the sport right now with his ultra-wide clavicles and narrow waist. All he still needs is more hams and calves, and the other guys will be fearing him.

Phil Heath

How many of you expect me to dog Phil because he's a Weider guy? No way! I don't operate like that. I think Phil has one of the absolute best physiques in pro bodybuilding and all the talent and potential in the world. He was second at the Arnold last year and then third at the Olympia, but can he hang with the big boys at this year's Olympia now that Victor and Kai are added into the mix?

The Gift has had a whole year to grow and improve, and I don't doubt for a minute that we will see a bigger and better physique than what he brought last year, but with the same trademark conditioning. Genetically, none of these guys can compare to Phil. He has those round muscle bellies and tiny joints that you had to get from God before you were even born. If he has brought up his chest and back, Phil is going to be very dangerous and could even win. The only other thing I would like to see Phil work on is his posing and presentation, which I don't feel do justice to his amazing lines.


Toney Freeman


Melvin Anthony

Toney Freeman

With two wins in 2008 and a fifth at the Mr. Olympia, it feels weird waiting this long to bring up the X-Man. But that's what I was talking about earlier when I said this year's show was unique. Toney has posted photos of himself up a few weeks out from shows where he looks so incredible that you can't imagine he won't win. He did that before the Arnold this year, but by the time he got to Columbus a lot of that freaky fullness had evaporated into the stratosphere. With the lineup being so strong this time, he can't risk being flat like that again or he could be struggling just to make the top 10. But, if Toney comes in with that elusive combination of grainy condition and fullness, a top five spot is well within his reach. And, from what I've heard recently from him, he's back to eating carbs again. Some of the added thickness he needs to get past a lot of his rivals may already be in evidence at the Olympia. Considering Toney is already well into his 40s and still improving, you have to give him props.

Melvin Anthony

Like Toney, Melvin has been in the Olympia top five before. He's a true contender for the top five again if he nails that condition in his glutes and hams like the judges want him to. I hope he does, but regardless, I am


Branch Warren


Silvio Samuel

eagerly anticipating his posing routine. I've gone on record as saying that I feel Melvin is the best poser of all time, meaning that he actually hits a lot of amazing poses, as well as being entertaining and innovative. Whatever routine he brings, I am sure he will leave the crowd breathless. And even though some people think the lineup this year is too tough for Melvin to make top five, I wouldn't be so sure. I know that Dexter's win last year gave him new hope that a guy with great shape and symmetry can rise to the top, so I have a feeling we might just see the best Melvin ever this time around.

Branch Warren

In trying to come up with the last two spots in my rankings, I actually had a tie between Branch and Silvio. On any given day, each is capable of being the other, and each is also more than capable of breaking into the top five. Branch is the workhorse of pro bodybuilding and the epitome of the hard-working athlete who does the best with what God gave him. Nobody has added more mass over the years than Branch has, and he also continues to show more muscle maturity and detail.

He's come a long way from being the guy with the freaky legs. I said on the MD radio show a while back that he was the only man to win three Most Muscular Awards from the Arnold Classic, but I stand corrected. Looking over at my mantel, I see that we're tied! I might have won four, but they didn't have that award the first year I won the Arnold.

But anyway, we're talking about Branch. When it comes to size and condition, the big man from Texas can hold his own with any of these guys. Branch may not have the pretty shape and lines of someone like Dexter, Victor, or Phil, but you never know when he may catch one or more of those dudes slipping and thunder right past them. More than a few people thought Branch could have won this year's Arnold Classic, or at the very least beaten Victor to be runner-up to Kai.

Silvio Samuel

Last but definitely not least is El Matador, who has become a good friend of mine over the past couple years. What does Silvio need to get past seventh place, the spot he's occupied for the last two Olympias? Two things: more mass, and better posing/presentation. Silvio is one of the only competitors who stays in excellent condition year-round. He never looks more than a month out from a contest— but this could also be his downfall.

Silvio eats super-clean all the time, and in fact I suspect he has a real phobia about eating junk. But you know what? It might be that eating some junk here and there would be just what he needs to pack on some additional mass. Silvio also does not enjoy practicing his posing, even though he does understand it's something that has been holding him back. If Silvio is willing to make some changes, which can be a scary thing for us creatures of habit, he stands a better chance of fighting for a top spot.

A Bad Show to Gamble On

I am definitely not a gambling man. But even if I were, I wouldn't want to touch this year's Mr. Olympia. Never before have I talked to so many people about who they picked to win and gotten shrugs and repeated responses of "No idea," or "Beats the hell out of me." Personally, I think it's awesome for the sport that we have so many athletes this year who stand a real chance of leaving Las Vegas as Mr. Olympia. We'll all be on the edges of our seats for this one, which is something that doesn't happen often enough.

So, who do you have to win? You see? I just heard at least four or five names being shouted out all at once. And that, my friends, is what is going to make the 2009 Mr. Olympia one I know we'll all be talking about many years from now.

Got a question for Flex Wheeler, or do you simply want to see what he's up to? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Flex personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, No Bull, to his own Flex Wheeler Full Access section! ■


Vegas

DEXTER JACKSON

1-HIT WONDER?

Has Dexter Jackson reached his pinnacle?

By Flex Wheeler, Photography by Per Bernal



An Inspiration to 'The Little Guys'

When you think of Mr. Olympia champions, you tend to think of men who were either already pretty brawny before they touched a weight, or who grew like proverbial weeds once they started pumping iron. Pictures of **Ronnie** from his high school football days show how he was already bigger than some guys ever get. And **Dorian**? Just a year and a half after he started working out, he won his first contest and represented the United Kingdom as a Heavyweight at the IFBB World Games.

Dexter Jackson won his first contest after only six months of training, but he was no Heavyweight. In fact, he was a 137-pound bantamweight, the first bantam to ever win an Overall title in an NPC Florida event. This was hardly a guy you would have thought was ever going to become Mr. Olympia one day a full *one hundred pounds* heavier, and beating monsters like **Jay Cutler** to do it. If you had seen him back in 1990 winning that first show, would you have ever in a million years believed he would one day build the physique he has today? I doubt it. The fact that Dexter was able to do it gives hope to all the guys out there who didn't start out particularly large (and I can identify with those guys myself, because I was a pretty skinny kid until my late teens).





The Amateur Years: Dexter Grows, and Grows, and GROWS

Dexter didn't stay a bantamweight very long. By 1992, he had jumped up to the next weight class, the lightweights, which goes up to 154 pounds. That year he took third at the NPC Southern States, and decided he really needed to beef up in a major way if he was going to succeed in this bodybuilding thing. By the time he came back to the stage in 1995, he had leapfrogged right over the middleweights and was now a full-fledged light-heavyweight. Finally, you could start to see real signs of the potential Dexter possessed to become a good pro.

But unlike a **Phil Heath** or an **Evan Centopani**, that pro card was not going to happen right away. Even though he won the light-heavyweight class at the USA Championships in 1995 (a show remembered best for Heavyweight runner-up **Craig Titus** leaving the stage in a tantrum and smashing his trophy), it would be three more years until Dexter turned professional by winning the IFBB North American— a show with a track record of turning out better female pros than males. Cases in point: **Cory Everson**, **Lenda Murray** and **Kim Chizevsky**, with a total of 18 Ms. Olympia titles between them.

The last man to have won the North American and go on to win a pro show or even make top five at the Olympia or Arnold Classic had been my boy **Paul Dillett**, who won it in '92. As a side note, none of the guys who have won the North American since Dexter have accomplished those things either. Typically the best pros come out of the NPC USA or Nationals. Nobody expected this Dexter Jackson guy from Florida to do a whole lot as a pro.





When Flex Met Dex

The first time I met Dexter was at the 1999 Arnold Classic. I had won it the year before and I would win it again the next year, but in '99 I was sitting out the spring shows and focusing on the Mr. Olympia. A few months before this, I had narrowly lost to Ronnie in New York, as he was beginning his eight years of domination, and I had no intention of letting him beat me again. But anyway, I was working a booth at the expo and Dexter came up to talk to me. He told me how I had been a huge inspiration to him and how he thought I had the most perfect physique ever. Needless to say, I was quite flattered.

Dexter was there competing for the first time as a pro, and I told him I thought he looked fantastic for a rookie. He was a little discouraged because of the callouts he had at the judging, which basically let him know he hadn't made the top five. He was correct, at the end of that night he wound up seventh— Nasser won the Arnold that time. Dexter really admired what I had done in my pro career thus far and asked me for some advice on what he needed to do to move up the ladder. I told him he had excellent shape, symmetry and condition, and all he really needed was a little more mass. I warned him to be careful not to come in too heavy though, because condition was just as critical. Dexter laughed at that.

"Flex, I diet for four weeks and I don't even do any cardio," he told me. Right then, I knew this guy was a true freak. Who the hell doesn't have to do cardio? And as a man who always had to suffer through some miserable contest preps, I admit to feeling just a twinge of jealousy hearing that.



DEXTER'S PRO VICTORIES

2002	English Grand Prix
2003	Show of Strength
2004	Iron Man Pro
2004	San Francisco Pro
2004	Australian Grand Prix
2005	Arnold Classic
2006	Arnold Classic
2007	Australian Grand Prix
2008	Arnold Classic
2008	Australia Grand Prix
2008	New Zealand Elite Pro
2008	Romania Grand Prix
2008	Mr. Olympia

DEXTER'S ARNOLD CLASSIC AND OLYMPIA RECORD

	Arnold Classic	Olympia
1999	7th place	9th place
2000	5th place	9th place
2001	5th place	8th place
2002	3rd place	4th place
2003	4th place	3th place
2004	3rd place	4th place
2005	**Winner**	did not compete
2006	**Winner**	4th place
2007	2nd place	3rd place
2008	**Winner**	**Winner**





From Rags to Riches

You see Dexter flossing these days in a Mercedes-Benz or a tricked-out BMW 850, and you probably have no idea how rough his early days as a pro were. After that 1999 Mr. Olympia (freakin' Ronnie beat me again, and Kevin too, but that's a whole other story), I hung out a lot with Dexter over in Europe when we both competed in the Grand Prix shows in England and Italy (I was second to Ronnie at both, Dexter was fourth behind us and Kevin both times). That's when I really started getting to know the man, and realized how much he had invested in his dream of being a top pro bodybuilder. Back home in Florida, his wife and their four kids were sleeping on the floor because they couldn't afford furniture. Whatever money they were earning was going toward his food, supplements, and traveling to shows. Dexter was gambling in a big way, but he believed in himself and knew the payday was coming.

Rising To The Top

Dexter was slowly but surely making his way up the ranks, but it would still be a few more years until he had a breakthrough. His first pro win came in 2002 at the English Grand Prix, but his career really turned around a year later at the GNC Show of Strength when he beat **Jay Cutler** and **Kevin Levrone** to win. Both Jay and Kevin were former Arnold Classic champions and Mr. Olympia runner-ups. If there was one show you could point to that really put Dexter on the map as a top guy, that was it.

The road ahead wasn't smooth, and Dexter took some lumps here and there with a few controversial placings. But the whole time, he gained a well-deserved reputation as the most consistently-shredded man in pro bodybuilding. With most of the guys, everybody would speculate, "Gee, do you think so-and-so will be in shape at such-and-such show?" Nobody ever said that about Dexter. It would be like wondering if a blue whale is going to be big or a cheetah will be fast. He's 'The Blade,' fool— of course he's always gonna show up ripped to the bone!

2008: Year of The Blade or, David Beats Goliath

Last year was the best ever for Dexter. He kicked the season off with a third Arnold Classic title (you still need one more to tie my record, though, bro!) and racked up three more wins in Australia, New Zealand, and Romania. This set him up as a favorite to challenge two-time Mr. Olympia Jay Cutler for the Mr. Olympia title. But honestly, who thought he had a chance? Yeah, he had an incredible physique with shape, proportion, and cuts beyond belief. But the Mr. Olympia had always been a big man's show, and since **Lee Haney**'s first win in 1984, almost a quarter-century before 2008, the average weight for a winner was around 250-260.









Ronnie had been a rice cake away from 300 that one time. Defending champ Jay Cutler was a 280-pound behemoth, and Dexter was giving up a full 40 pounds to him. But a funny thing happened once they stood next to each other. Dexter's shape and condition, combined with his round, full look, actually made the weight difference a moot point. With his bigger joints and wider waist, Jay really didn't appear to be any bigger than Dexter. And in the end, the judges didn't just reward the biggest physique. They awarded the Mr. Olympia title to Dexter Jackson, the man with the best physique on stage that day.

I confess to feeling mixed emotions when his name was called out as winner. On one hand, I was so overwhelmed with joy for his success after years and years of working so hard that I almost threw up. Really. On the other hand, it was bittersweet because I was watching Dexter achieve something I was never able to in the 10 seasons I competed as a pro. I won four Arnold Classic titles and a total of 17 pro shows, but I never became Mr. Olympia. It's a strange thing to be envious of someone's success and to be happy for them at the same time, but that's exactly how I feel.

Will Dexter Be a One-hit Wonder?

A few months ago in my "Flex Critique" (February 2009 MD), I examined the subject of whether or not Dexter would be able to repeat and earn at least one more Mr. Olympia title. Now that we are getting a lot closer to judgment day, I have been thinking more and more about his chances. Nobody ever thought, even when Dexter had already won a few pro shows, that he would ever be Mr. Olympia. And now, the odds do seem stacked against him. What a freaking lineup this year: **Jay**, **Victor**, **Kai**, **Heath**, **Wolf**, just to name a few of the big names who are all capable of winning a Sandow trophy.

But I tell you guys, I think Dexter can pull it off and hold off all the challengers, and I hope he does. I have watched this man, who will be turning 40 in November, scratch and claw his way to the top over the years. Dexter Jackson has transformed himself from a 137-pound novice into the greatest bodybuilder in the world, and he has earned his proper respect due along the way. Have we seen the best of Dexter Jackson, or is the best yet to come? I for one think he's still got more in the tank, and a couple more surprises up his sleeve. ■




Gold's Gym





DON'T COUNT ME OUT!

VICTOR MARTINEZ IS ON A MISSION LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Exclusive interview by Ron Harris, Photography by Per Bernal

It's been said that you can judge a man by how he reacts under pressure. Getting ready for a contest like the Mr. Olympia is serious business; it's the toughest bodybuilding competition in the world. The training and the diet at this level are absolutely grueling. Now imagine you have to do all that, while dealing with a family tragedy— the brutal and senseless murder of a loved one.

At 11 weeks away from the 2009 Mr. Olympia, Eridania Rodriguez, eldest sister of Victor Martinez, went missing from her cleaning job at a Manhattan office building. Days later, her bound and beaten body was found stuffed into an air vent. The alleged murderer worked in the building as a freight elevator operator.

For a while afterward, none of us were sure Victor would still be competing in the Mr. Olympia. And to be honest, I was not looking forward to talking to him about something so trivial as a bodybuilding contest, even though professional bodybuilding is Victor's job and he is one of the favorites to win. But when he finally called me for the interview near midnight at nine weeks out, I got an idea of just how strong Victor Martinez is, and how much he loved the sister who was stolen from him by an evil human being.

Victor is no stranger to strife. In just the past few years he's dealt with the deaths of both parents and his best friend, the loss of his gym, a brief jail sentence, and a pec tear. This latest tragedy trumps them all, but still Victor does what he always has— he keeps moving forward.



RH: I have to start off with the most significant event in your life recently, which was the tragic death of your sister Eridania on July 7. You had a family of 10 brothers and sisters, and in a sense I understand she was head of the family since your mom passed away. Can you tell me about her?

VM: She was the rock of the family. She held it down and always tried to stop any trouble before it even started. Iris— that's what we all called her— was funny. She was a prankster. But most of all, she was all about the family and would do anything for them. She and her husband had just finished building a house in the Dominican Republic that they had been working on for 10 years. They wanted to be sure they had something to leave for their kids and their grandkids when they were gone.

RH: Eridania was also a big part of your bodybuilding career when it came to your nutrition, right?

VM: She cooked almost all of my meals. There was this time my brother-in-law told me about, that he came home tired from a hard day at work, and Iris had a bunch of food cooked up. He was getting ready to eat some when she told him, oh no, that's for my brother, Victor. He needs these meals for his contest! He told me about it and said you know, your sister really loves you, Vic.

Another time, I think it was in 2000, I was at Steel Gym training for the Junior USA. She called me at the gym and asked when I needed to eat again. I told her, and the next thing I knew, she had cooked the food, packed it up, got on the subway, and delivered it right to me at the gym. The other guys were like, man, I wish I had a sister like that!

RH: She was one of your biggest fans.

VM: More than that. She was the last person I would call before I had to get ready to go onstage, and the first person I would call when I got off. And it hurt her the way the sport wasn't always fair, how it could be political. She would complain about it to other people in the family, but never to me, because she didn't ever want to get me down. With me she was always positive and encouraging. Iris was always proud of me and wanted me to win.

RH: OK, this will be tough, but we have to do it. We've all read

the news reports, but tell us about the incident from your point of view.

VM: That Tuesday night she disappeared, something felt wrong to me and I couldn't put my finger on it. I was nervous and couldn't relax. I had a hard time falling asleep. I usually shut my phone off at about 11:30 and don't turn it back on again until I get up in the morning, but for some reason I put it on vibrate instead.

So I kept getting up out of bed and pacing around my place, and I happened to pick up my phone and saw all these missed calls from my sisters. They never call me that late unless it's something serious. They said Iris never came home from work. The first thing I said was, I'll meet you at her job right now, and I left.

The building has 26 floors, and when I got there, I asked what the last floor she had worked on was. I ran up there and found her cleaning cart, which she never would have just left like that. She was a hard worker and took pride in her job. Her hair clip was on the floor, too. It took me a half-hour to search that floor, and when I was done, the cops were there and kicked everybody out so they could start their search.

These were just rookies. They searched five floors in 28 minutes and I told the one in charge that was way too fast. I said I knew my sister was still in that building. I knew they were going to try and pull that 24-hour crap about how she couldn't be declared officially missing yet, but I knew Iris too well. She wasn't the type to run away. The security cameras showed her entering the building, but not leaving.

By morning, all the local TV stations were there, and I talked to any reporter I could. I wanted to make sure this story was out there and it wouldn't be swept under the carpet. There were about another 25 cops in there now, and I distinctly remember my brother trying to tell them to check the air ducts. They ignored him. That was Wednesday.




NATIONAL
PHYSIQUE

Thursday was one of the worst days of my life. All I kept thinking about was, where is she? Is she hurt, is she scared? Who took her? I just felt so helpless. I couldn't go to the gym, and I couldn't eat much of anything. I had a feeling of dread and I knew something very bad had happened to her.

RH: When did you first have an idea that it was this Joseph Yabon guy who was behind Eridania's disappearance?

VM: As early as Wednesday night, we were asking who else was in that building that night, and had anyone left? We found out there had been a freight elevator operator who was there working overtime to help a moving company, but he had left early because he was sick. That was the red flag right there. I used to work as a doorman, and you don't give up overtime hours unless you're on your deathbed. That shit is golden.

He was taken in for questioning, and my brother-in-law filled me in on some things. He's an NYPD detective. Yabon had scratches all over his arms and his neck, and he tried to say they were from yard work or something. Right then, I said that's the guy. I knew it had to be him. The cops let him go, but they kept a tail on him and finally arrested him a week later after DNA they found under my sister's fingernails matched his. But I'm getting ahead.

In the days Iris was missing, I stayed with my nephews and nieces and did my best to stay calm and composed. I had to be strong for them. When I left their house Friday night, I had a sinking feeling. I knew that the next day was going to be horrible. I hated being in my home, safe and comfortable in my bed when I knew she wasn't.

We got the call the next morning that a body had been found stuffed into a vent on the 12th floor of the building and bound in tape. I went down there and they wouldn't let me in. I sat out there for six hours before I decided I had to go back to her family, instead of leaving them alone when they were sad and scared.

RH: When was it confirmed that the body was, in fact, your sister's?

VM: On Sunday, the police asked my brother-in-law to come down to the morgue and identify the body. I went with him. What they showed us wasn't my sister. I mean, I knew it was her, but I couldn't process what I was looking at. It's an image I will never get out of my head. You could tell she had put up a fight and that her attacker had been vicious, merciless. I couldn't get the picture of that guy, that motherfucker Yabon, out of my head.

At that moment, I just wished he would feel pain every day for the rest of his life, and beyond. My sister didn't deserve that. She never hurt anybody and she was such a sweet, loving person.

RH: And she knew this guy, right? He had been giving her trouble?

VM: Yeah, he had been harassing her for a while. She told my aunt and my niece, but she made sure to make a point of saying, don't tell Victor. She knew that the minute I heard about it, I would go down there and beat that piece of shit with a baseball bat. I wouldn't even care if I went to jail for it. Nobody should have been bothering her. All Iris did was work hard for her three kids and three grandchildren. She never did anything wrong to anybody.





Mr. Olympia Memories

2004 Mr. Olympia: Ninth Place

"This was my first Olympia. What most people don't know was that it was also the weekend I lost my gym. I was so stressed out over it that I didn't sleep for three whole days. I couldn't even sleep in my room at the Mandalay Bay Hotel. I was so wound up I kept going down to play roulette. I finally crashed once the show was over."

2005 Mr. Olympia: Fifth Place

"I was having legal problems in New York, and it just wasn't a good environment to get ready for a big contest. I stayed with my friend Mike McGucken in Philly. He was great. He would wake me up in the morning like, come on man, you gotta win the Olympia, get up and eat so we can go train! I did my own diet that year, too."

2006 Mr. Olympia: Third Place

"This was the first time I worked with Chad. I felt really good going into the show because I knew my physique was at another level. But something still told me it wasn't my time. Jay won, and Ronnie was second place. I went to Pure nightclub after the show and partied with Steve-O from "Jackass." I told him I had just taken third place in the world in my sport, and he pulled a big fat joint out of his back pocket and lights it up. The bouncers came over and made him put it out. They told me to stay away from Steve-O, because he's trouble. I told them I know, that's why he's a fun dude!"

2007 Mr. Olympia: Second Place

"What a bittersweet year. It was the only show where nobody congratulated me. Everyone was just like, oh man, I'm so sorry about what happened. It was like someone had died. I got a lot of sympathy, but that just made me depressed. I was with four of my buddies, and on the ride over to the show it was so loud in the car you couldn't hear yourself think. On the ride back, you could hear crickets. After a couple miles, I said, "Is someone gonna say something or what?" One of them pulled out a bottle of Patron, and I had the first drink. It took me a long time to recover from that show, emotionally. I even went to therapy a couple times to work through the anger and the frustration I felt."



RH: I am sure this has affected you deeply. Were you able to stick to any type of normal training and eating schedule with all this going on, or has that been the last thing on your mind?

VM: For a little over a week, I couldn't concentrate on anything like that. That part of my world just didn't exist. My family needed me, and that's all that mattered.

RH: Your family obviously knows how important the Mr. Olympia contest is to you. Are they urging you to do your best even more so now, since it's what your sister would have wanted?

VM: I know she's watching my every move now wherever she is. I owe it to Iris to train and diet as hard as I can and be the best I can possibly be.

RH: If I am correct, this is the third time you've had to prepare for a contest in the wake of losing someone in your family. Didn't both your mother and father pass while you were getting ready for shows?

VM: My mom died in 2006 when I was getting ready for the Olympia. In 2007 my best friend Mike McGucken died. Then my dad died last year when I was starting my prep for this year's Arnold.

RH: I know this is a hard question to answer, but is losing your sister worst of all because she was so much younger and particularly due to the way it happened?

VM: Of course. Losing someone to illness is one thing, but to have them taken away by some evil person and to know that she suffered the way she did— I have so much anger. She was such a good person. I hate to think about what she went through, how scared she must have been.

RH: I think some people assume that because you are so big and tough-looking on the outside, that things like this wouldn't affect you as much as a regular person. Just how off-base would that assumption be?

VM: That's just stupid. My family means everything to me and I loved my sister to death.

RH: Is the training harder to focus on now, or is it something you find useful to take your mind off the bad things of just for a little while?



VM: I'm trying to channel the anger and the pain into my training, where it can actually be productive. I'm motivated now to be my best for my sister's memory. I can hear her voice in my head telling me I can do it.

RH: You are finally opening up your Muscle Maker Grill restaurant in a couple weeks. What were the challenges along the way you had to deal with?

VM: Actually, we opened up on Friday, July 17. We did a 'soft opening' so the employees can get the hang of things before we do the grand opening on August 9. MD is covering it. The challenges were really all the coordinating. You have to coordinate licenses, permits, builders, vendors, so many people and so many steps.

I couldn't have done it without all the help from my friend of 10 years, Ande Taylor. She worked for Bear Stearns, but she got fed up with the corporate world. I had a few friends who had said they would go into the business with me, but they all had their own jobs, families, and duties. Ande was available and she was excited to get into something totally different from the finance industry, where she could make her own schedule and do things her own way.

I warned her up front that money would be very tight for a while, but she wasn't afraid. We had a lot of highs and lows along the way to the opening, and I'm sure there were a few times she wanted to smack me. I took a few big risks, like maxing out all my credit cards. I also have to thank Gerard Dente from MHP. He certainly didn't need to help me out at all with this business, but he did. Few people will ever know what a big heart he really has.

RH: Steve told me that you are training regularly with Victor Munoz again. How long were you two not working together consistently, and how are things going now?

VM: We never really stopped training together, but for a while our schedules were just not meshing at all. Toward the end of last year and in the first few months of this year, we just couldn't seem to hook up to train very often. But after I got second at the Arnold, he heard all that negative shit about how I was all done and he called me up pissed off. He said that's it, we are getting back in the gym and shutting all the haters up. Soon after that, we started hitting it hard five days a week in the gym. Victor has a real pas-

sion for training and for the sport, and working with him makes a big difference.

RH: When we spoke right after the Arnold Classic, you said that all your previously injured leg needed to get back to where it needs to be is time. You've had a few months since then, so how is the leg looking now?

VM: We have been pushing pretty hard on the leg workouts. Once you have an injury like that, it's never exactly the same again. But I can say it looks a lot better than it did at the Arnold.

RH: You are just about to turn 36. Do you find that you have had to make certain adjustments in your prep as you get older? Is the fat a bit tougher to get rid of than it used to be 10 or 12 years ago?

VM: Luckily, I can honestly say no. I never hold a lot of body fat because I always eat pretty clean. I don't like junk food. I love meat. That's my favorite thing in the world to eat—steak, chicken, turkey, lean pork. One part of the diet I hate is toward the end when I have to eat a lot of fish to get rid of the last few pounds of body fat.

Even in the off-season, the only bad thing I will have is pizza twice a week, and a big burger once a week. My carbs are all coming from rice and potatoes. I probably have to do a little more cardio now than I used to, but it's nothing major. You'll never see me doing three hours a day like some trainers have their clients doing. That's ridiculous.

RH: People seem to have pretty short memories in this sport. That being said, if you show up at your best in Las Vegas, do you think people will forget that you were a little off at the Arnold?

VM: In bodybuilding, you're only as good as your last show. It's always been that way.

RH: Who do you see as your main competition?

VM: Like Ronnie said once, everybody! I never make any predictions and I don't get caught up in all that. It's a hell of a lineup this year, and it's all going to come down to who wants it the most, and who nails their condition perfectly.

RH: I like Chad and I would not want to suggest that he hasn't been doing the best possible job with your nutrition, but how confident are you that he really knows your body now and can bring you into the Olympia looking like you did in 2007 or even better?

VM: Very confident. One great thing about him too is that if he takes you on as his client, he's going to be on your side. He got more upset about the Arnold than I did. Chad started talking about how I was ahead by this many points in the first round and this and that, and I was like Chad, don't worry about it. It's over!

RH: I very much appreciate this interview Victor, and I only wish we could have spoken under better circumstances. But I will be rooting for you, and a lot of other people will be, too. And I sincerely hope your run of bad luck is finally over.

VM: OK Ron, thanks. ■

Victor Martinez Contest History

1993	Elmo's Gym contest	Teenage Champion
1994	Bev Francis Atlantic States	No place
1997	New Jersey Suburban	Lightheavyweight & Overall Champion
1997	Metropolitan NYC	Lightheavyweight & Overall Champion
1999	Bev Francis Atlantic States	2nd, Heavyweight
2000	Junior Nationals	Heavyweight Champion
2000	NPC Nationals	Heavyweight & Overall Champion
2001	Night of Champions	8th place
2002	Iron Man Pro Invitational	9th place
2002	Arnold Classic	13th place
2003	Night of Champions	**Winner**
2004	Mr. Olympia	Ninth place
2004	GNC Show of Strength	**Winner**
2005	Arnold Classic	7th place
2005	San Francisco Pro	5th place
2005	New York Pro	3rd place
2005	Mr. Olympia	5th place
2006	Arnold Classic	3rd place
2006	Mr. Olympia	3rd place
2007	Arnold Classic	**Winner**
2007	Mr. Olympia	2nd place
2009	Arnold Classic	2nd place





IS IT TIME FOR KAI GREENE TO TAKE THE OLYMPIA THRONE?

'THE PREDATOR' TASTES THE SANDOW!

Exclusive interview by Ron Harris, Photgraphy by Per Bernal

Just a few years ago, nobody would have considered Kai Greene to be a potential Mr. Olympia— but that was then. Over the past three years, 'The Predator' has willed his physique into an increasingly more powerful package of muscle density, shape, separation, and detail. Like ***Ronnie Coleman*** *before him, after God made Kai, He 'broke the mold.'*

The man's physique is truly unique. And when you get to know Kai Greene, you realize he's also a unique man. As much a philosopher as he is a bodybuilder, Kai sees more deeply into just about everything than the average person. Perhaps in times past, he would have been a poet or a prophet. When you talk to him, you can forget about hearing the same old stuff about reps and grams of protein that you've read a thousand times before. Kai Greene is possibly on the verge of being crowned the greatest bodybuilder in the world, and I honestly hope it happens.

If anyone still has preconceptions of bodybuilding champions being one-dimensional meatheads, Kai's becoming the ambassador of our sport could go a long way toward shattering those stereotypes clear to Hell!

RH: Kai, you have been competing since, what, the late 1980s? I am sure the Mr. Olympia contest seemed like a fantasy way back then. What does it mean to you to *finally* be getting close to taking that Olympia stage?

KG: My first contest was in 1990. That's a very hard question to answer. It's tough to answer without going through a whole lot of stories, struggles, and reflections, if I want to make my answer real. Honestly, I have mixed emotions about competing in the Mr. Olympia. When I was a kid, bodybuilding was different, and it was portrayed very differently. It may sound like a cliché, but that seemed like a golden era to me. No pro bodybuilders that I knew of had died or had serious health problems, and pros were treated with genuine respect. There was certainly none of the behind the scenes reporting on all the negative aspects of their lives, and such disrespect and mockery from those who profess to be fans of the sport.

I hate to see the way the sport and the athletes are depicted so often now. You have a lot of people in the industry, even people doling out endless advice about things such as nutrition and drugs, who have no genuine love for the sport themselves. They don't appreciate bodybuilding as an art form and the principles it teaches that go so far beyond merely altering your physical appearance.

True bodybuilding is about self-mastery, and you can apply that to any aspect of your life to achieve whatever it is you want. You need a pretty high level of that type of



self-mastery just to be an average bodybuilder, much less an elite professional. That's why it upsets me when people liken our sport with negative things like drug abuse, drug trafficking, illegal activities, and so on. Where is the love for the sport, the training, posing, stimulating positive changes in the body and the mind?

A person who has lost his way can find direction in bodybuilding. I've seen it happen so many times. You start with nothing but an idea in your head, a vision, and then through the application of a solid work ethic and gaining an understanding of proper training and nutrition, you start laying down one brick at a time. This kid from the projects has been laying those bricks down for 20 years now.

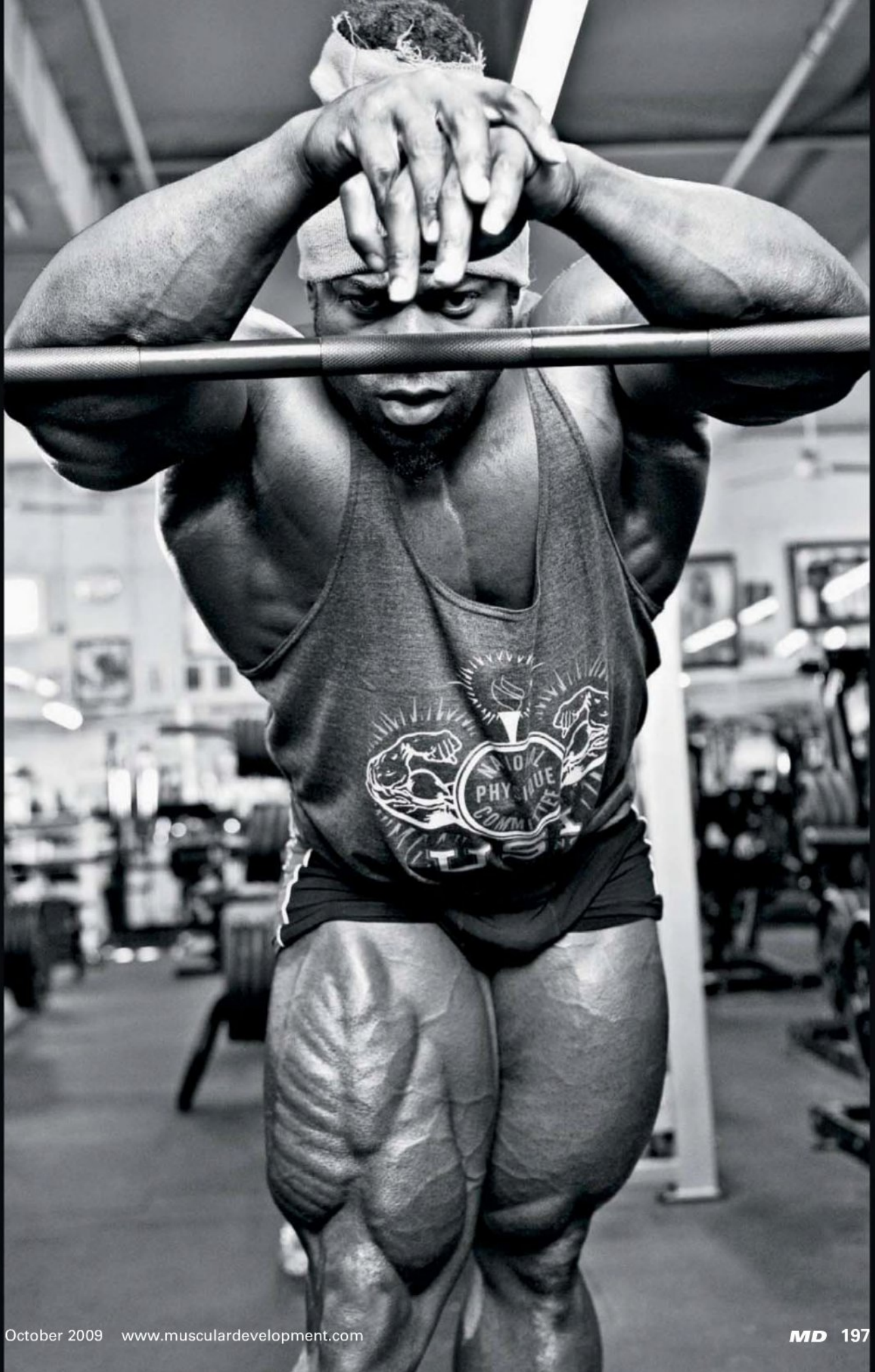
So to get back to what you asked me because I know it seems like I went way off track, I do celebrate the fact that I am competing in the Mr. Olympia contest, yes. But at the same time, I have been doing a lot of thinking lately about where the sport has been, where it's at now, and where it's going. I'm part of that, so are you, and so is everybody reading this issue of MD.

RH: Knowing you, I had a feeling you weren't just going to say 'Yeah, I'm really excited to be doing the show, Ron!' You were actually qualified to compete at both the 2007 and 2008 Mr. Olympia contests. It's often said that everything happens for a reason, so why do you think that waiting until this year to compete in the Olympia could very well work out to be the best possible timing?

KG: Absolutely. I am more ready now in every way than I would have been either of those years. Physically, mentally, spiritually— everything.

RH: I talked to Steve, and he said that as far as you and Oscar are concerned, there is no doubt whatsoever that you will win. What gives you that level of total confidence? Is it something you think all the other top guys competing also share?

KG: I think all people who are driven to be champions have certain attitudes and states of mind in common. Take a boxer preparing for a big fight. He absolutely needs to believe he will win that fight, or else he doesn't have a reason to train





hard every day. He doesn't even have a reason to step into that ring. You have to have a reason to explain why you do what you do. Confidence comes from doing. When you are committed enough, you find it less difficult to work within the blueprint needed to succeed.

If you could hear the inner thoughts of a boxer getting ready for a fight, or a bodybuilder preparing for the Mr. Olympia, the average person might perceive him as being cocky or over-confident. How can that person not have any doubts like the rest of us? We all have the power to create our own reality and our own destiny, but most people are plagued with too many self-defeating beliefs.

The truth is that we will ourselves to be whatever it is we want to be. A man can will himself to be a doctor, or a bum. It's his choice. Most people simply don't see themselves as having this power to create. Creators don't wait around for fate or the benevolence of some deity to make their wishes and dreams come true. They take it upon themselves to create that reality. That's where confidence really stems from: knowing that they have that power.

RH: I know the focus during prep has to be on yourself, but I would like to get your opinions on some of the other guys doing the show. First of all, what do you think about the reigning champion, Dexter Jackson?

KG: I really respect what Dexter represents. His story is an amazing testament to what a person can do if they use their mind and refuse to listen to the voices that say 'no, you can't ever do that.' Just a few years ago, when we had **Ronnie Coleman** as Mr. Olympia, if you had said we would have a Mr. Olympia in the near future who would be under 5'8" and weighing 230 pounds, people would have either laughed or told you that was ridiculous.

The assumption was that because we had such a huge, heavy man like Ronnie, that from then on the winners would have to be as big or bigger. Dexter started competing as a bantamweight, weighing only 137 pounds. But he had a dream of being the best in the world,



and he kept chipping away at that dream, regardless of what others thought.

RH: How about the two-time champ and last year's runner-up, Jay Cutler, who went on record as saying he considers you his greatest obstacle to reclaiming his title this year?

KG: Jay could have given up a long time ago, but he didn't. I respect him for that. To me, Jay represents someone with a real love and passion for the sport, who has maintained that passion for a very long time. Few teenage champions ever stay with the sport in the long-term and fulfill the potential and promise that's predicted for them. Jay did. He never gave up on his dreams, even though he had times in his career when I'm sure he was tempted to quit.

RH: Victor is going to have to prepare for the contest while grieving over his sister, who was murdered in July. Can you imagine having to do that?

KG: I can't, but if anyone can do it successfully, it's Victor. To be dealt a blow like this, to have a loved one taken away the way that she was, has to be traumatic. My heart goes out to him and that whole family. It's too bad there's no time-out in preparing for the Mr. Olympia, because it must be tough for him to deal with bodybuilding right now. His heart has to be hurting. I want to send him much respect, love, and positive energy.

RH: Phil Heath, 'The Gift'— many feel that he is destined to be Mr. Olympia one day, something that was being said about him even before he turned pro.

KG: Honestly, I thought Phil won the 2008 Mr. Olympia. At least a very strong case could have been made for him to win, even though it didn't go down that way. I recall making a statement either in an interview or my column prior to that show that Phil had never been tested. He was, and he responded spectacularly. When I think about **Heath**, the phrase 'limitless potential' comes to mind.

RH: MD's own Big Bad Wolf is coming back to rumble after having his own hernia surgery a couple months after yours. Is he ready for prime time yet, based on what you saw of him a couple months back in Pittsburgh?

KG: I think he is, but what impresses me even more about Dennis than his physique is the relationship he has



with his wife. Everywhere I've seen him, his wife is always right there. They roll tight like that. It warms my heart to see that. Here's a guy who's on magazine covers and is surrounded at all the shows by fitness and figure girls, but he's a devoted family man. It's clear when you watch them interact that they are best friends and she's a big part of his career. Part of me really longs to have something like that.

RH: What can we expect to see in Las Vegas that will be different from what we saw in Columbus?

KG: You'll have to wait and see, but my goal is to be better every time than I was before. You can interpret that however you like.

RH: See, aside from competing and your guest posing appearances, you're always fully covered up. Bodybuilders usually have the stereotype of being big show-offs, but I think you must be the complete opposite of that.

KG: That's just an old-school bodybuilding thing I picked up many years ago. I remember going to early amateur shows to compete, and being at the high school or whatever early in the morning. You see people start to arrive, and you're all trying to size each other up. This was back when they would wear the Hot Skins tights, boatneck tops—

RH: Crazee Wear, T. Micheal sweatshirts... I remember those days well.

KG: Yeah! You'd see some guys with those boatneck tops and they would have huge traps bulging out, and you'd see beefy, veiny forearms, and you'd get intimidated as they strutted around like peacocks. I know I used to see those dudes and feel like going home!

Then there would be other guys who were all covered up, quietly off in a corner listening to headphones. In clothes, sometimes these guys looked like shriveled up Cryptkeepers. If it wasn't for the Pro Tan on their face and hands, you wouldn't even know they were there to compete. But then, when they took off the sweats and started pumping up, those were always the guys who looked the best.

I specifically remember going to the AAU Teenage America in 1992 with my friend Julio Rivera. Julio was a really big kid, and from looking around backstage I

thought he had an easy win. But there was this other kid back there all covered up. He didn't impress me as being very big or anything, but I did notice his Buddhist-like concentration. The kid was so focused and relaxed as he started pumping up. When they got onstage, I couldn't believe how much bigger that kid looked. He won the Short class, beating Julio, and then won the Overall.

RH: And his name was?

KG: Branch Warren! So from then on I said to myself, the only place you need to try and look impressive is the stage. Anything else is just wasted effort. So I've always kept covered up.

RH: Your posing routine at the Arnold Classic was like nothing we had ever seen before. Are you going to try and top it for the Olympia?

KG: I'd like to. As I was saying earlier, it's up to each one of us to do what we can to help the sport of bodybuilding grow. One way to attract more attention to it is by having creative, entertaining routines. We need to increase the appeal and visibility of the sport. I think it's a shame that we don't have a presence on any major sports network. I flip through the channels and even poker is on ESPN.

It was a dream and a mission of so many of our predecessors in the sport to see it take off and fly, to become something millions of people could watch and appreciate. So if you ever see someone at a contest trying something new in his or her posing, don't laugh or poke fun. I really believe that posing performance is the key to increasing our visibility, which in turn will lead to more sponsors and more money for all parties.

RH: I heard a crazy rumor that you shaved your head— is it true? I hope not, because the long hair made you more unique— there are a million bald dudes already in the sport.

KG: (laughs) Man, news travels fast, doesn't it? No, I didn't shave my head bald and it's still long in the back. Originally, I was inspired by the look of a character from Mortal Kombat named Goro—

RH: The giant guy with four arms?

KG: Yeah, exactly. He's bald on most of his head, but has a long braid growing out of the top and the back. Now my hairstyle is much closer to that.



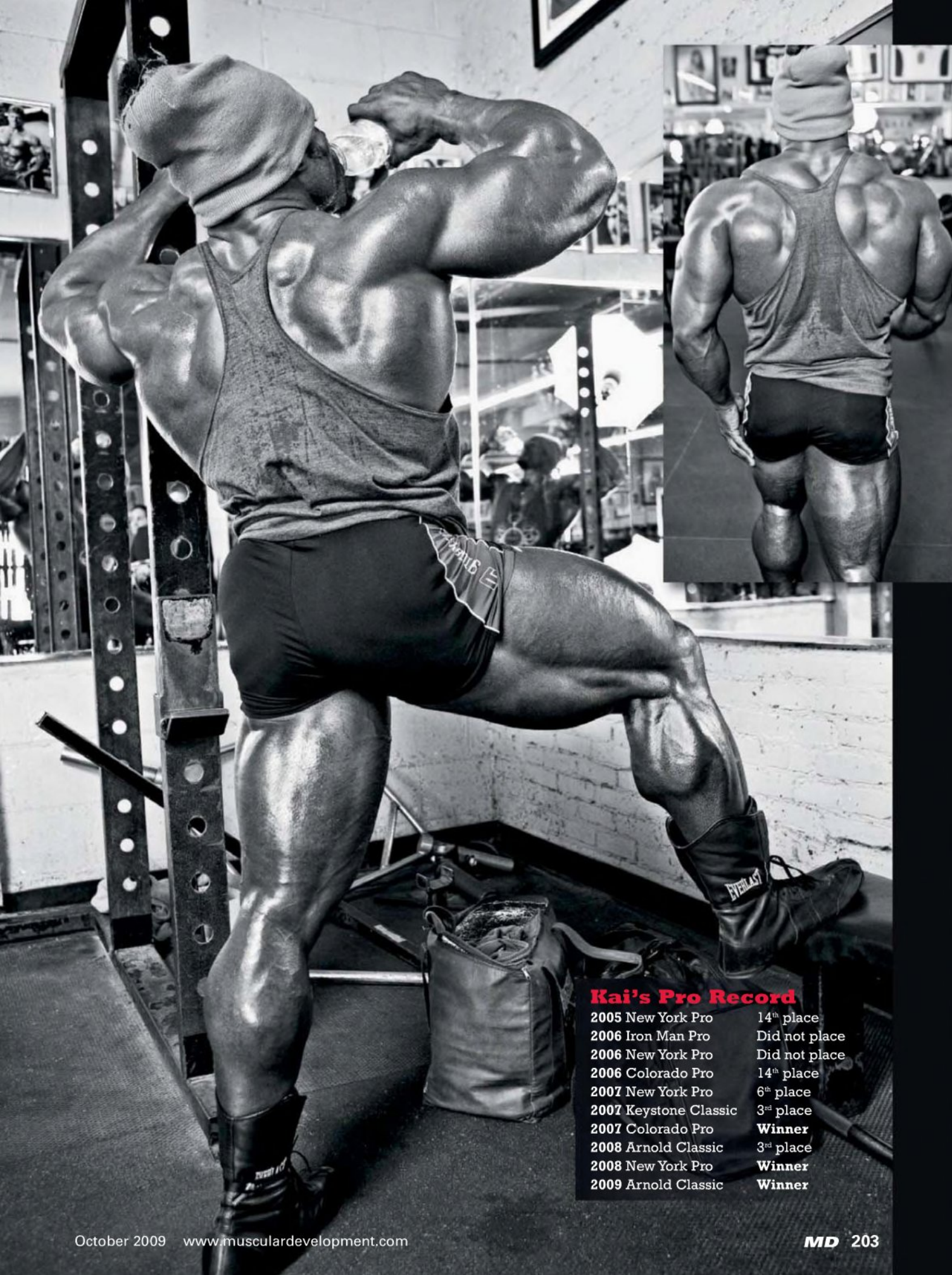


RH: Just out of curiosity, how long does it take to twist and braid all that hair of yours?

KG: It can be anywhere from six to eight hours. It's quite a tedious process.

RH: That's an odd way to end this interview, but those are all my questions. I wish you the best of luck and can't wait to see what you have in store for us at the Mr. Olympia.

KG: Thanks Ron, I do plan on displaying a package that's better in several ways to the one that won the Arnold for me. Oscar and I believe it will be the winning package at the Mr. Olympia, and I am doing everything in my power to make that a reality. ■



Kai's Pro Record

2005 New York Pro	14th place
2006 Iron Man Pro	Did not place
2006 New York Pro	Did not place
2006 Colorado Pro	14th place
2007 New York Pro	6th place
2007 Keystone Classic	3rd place
2007 Colorado Pro	**Winner**
2008 Arnold Classic	3rd place
2008 New York Pro	**Winner**
2009 Arnold Classic	**Winner**

THE REDEMPTION OF THE BIG BAD WOLF

Is This The Year Dennis Fulfills His Destiny?

Exclusive Interview by Ron Harris, Photography by Per Bernal

By now you all know what happened last year at the Mr. Olympia to Dennis Wolf. A few weeks out from the contest, he was looking unbeatable and was billed as a heavy favorite to unseat two-time champ Jay Cutler from his throne. Numerous comparison photos of the two from the 2007 edition of the show seemed to make a valid case that Wolf had what it took to snatch the Sandow out of Jay's hands and bring it home to Germany. But a funny thing happened on the way to the Mr. Olympia in the fall of 2008.

At the last minute, an experiment with lower carbs robbed Dennis of the size and fullness that would have been his most powerful weapon, along with his excellent shape and structure. Flatter than a pancake that's been run over by a Hummer, he still managed fourth place, but plenty of fans, disgusted with his failing to make good on predictions of greatness, wrote Wolf off as 'over-hyped' and 'overrated.' To make matters worse, Dennis had a painful hernia that had to be operated on shortly after the contest, knocking him out of the 2009 Arnold Classic he had fully intended on winning. Dennis still has legions of loyal fans, but there are also plenty out there to whom Wolf has something to prove. And that's what Dennis plans on doing on September 26th in Las Vegas.





RH: I have seen photos of you from recent appearances, and you are simply enormous! Is this the heaviest you have ever been? What is your weight now?

DW: Thank you! Yes, this is the most I have ever weighed in my life. I am 311 pounds now, which is more than 10 pounds heavier, with the same condition, than I was last year at this time. So I feel very confident about this year's Mr. Olympia contest.

RH: Before we get into this year, let's talk a bit about your past Mr. Olympia experiences. The year 2006 was your first Mr. O. Were you excited, nervous? How did you feel onstage up there for the first time when you had only been competing as a pro for a few weeks? How do you feel you looked? Were you disappointed when you did not place?

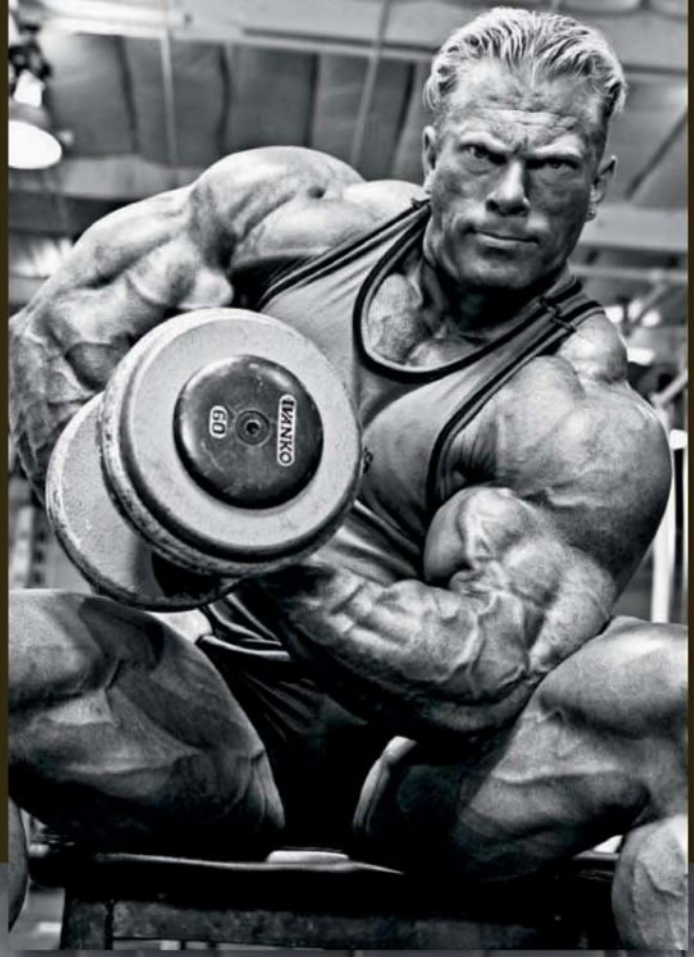
DW: It was my first year as a pro, and did not do any of the spring contests because I knew after I won the IFBB World in 2005 that I would need a

full year to make some needed improvements to get up there with the professionals. I only had one real goal for the three contests I did in the late summer and early fall of 2006, and that was to qualify for the Mr. Olympia. I had dreamed of being in the Mr. Olympia for a long time.

RH: Did you have a goal for that show, like top 10 or even top five?

DW: No, no, not at all. I knew that nobody knows who this Wolf guy from Germany is, and I even was realistic enough to know that my physique was not really ready for being compared to the top guys in the world. I expected to be somewhere around last place, so I wasn't upset when I got it. I came in the best shape I could and I was very excited to be there with the best in the world. And it was a shocking contest because Jay Cutler finally won after being second place so many times. It gave a lot of guys hope too, because I think it seemed to some of them like Ronnie was going to be Mr. Olympia for a hundred years!

RH: Eight years for a pro bodybuilder is kind of like 100 years in regular people's lives. 2007 was your second time at the Olympia. This time you shocked a lot of people and made top five. There

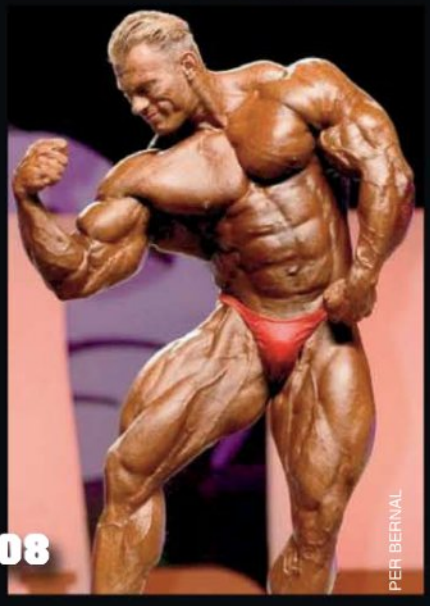












Dennis Wolf's Pro Record

2006 Santa Susanna Pro	3rd place
2006 Europa Super Show	7th place
2006 Montreal Pro	5th place
2006 Mr. Olympia	16th place
2007 New York Pro	3rd place
2007 Keystone Pro Classic	**Winner**
2007 Mr. Olympia	5th place
2008 Mr. Olympia	4th place

was also talk that the judges purposely kept you away from Jay Cutler because you would have made him look bad. What was the '07 Mr. Olympia like for you?

DW: The 2007 Mr. Olympia was the best I have ever looked so far in my career. I had worked very hard and made lots of improvements from the year before. Plus, I had won my first pro show in the spring a few months before and the magazines like MD were giving me so much publicity.

It was crazy how different the audience response was this time. In 2006, very few people even knew who I was, and I didn't have any fans out there cheering for me. But in 2007, the audience was going nuts when I came out and yelling "WOLF!" That felt so good. It gave me confidence, plus I knew that I was bigger and in better shape than ever before.

But like you said, the only problem with that contest was that I was never compared once to the reigning Mr. Olympia, Jay Cutler. At the time I was too excited to be upset about it. I was just thinking it was weird that they called me out to be compared with all the other guys like Victor, Dexter, and Ronnie, so why not Jay, too? I did want to have that chance, so that's why I tried to get close to Jay during the posedown before it was too late and the whole contest was over!

I want to also say that I don't blame the judges. Their job is very hard and nobody except the winner of the whole contest is ever happy with what they do. I would never, ever want to be a judge at a contest as tough as the Mr. Olympia, where you have so many guys who all look fantastic. I think it would give me the worst headache.

RH: Fast forward to 2008. This time you came into the Olympia as a favorite. At three weeks out you were looking untouchable at what— 280 pounds or so? But then the low-carb diet ate up 15 pounds of muscle and left you flat. Was it hard for you to go through with that show, knowing you should have looked better? Did you feel like you didn't even want to be up onstage?

DW: I started my diet with Chad at 10 weeks out from the Olympia. People never believe me when I say this, but after five weeks I was totally ready to get onstage! I just have a very fast metabolism like that, plus I never get fat anyway. If you see photos of me at any time of the year I am always pretty lean just like Dexter is.

So here I was at five weeks out and I am 285 pounds. I wish I could compete right then, but I still have more than a month left. I kept getting a tiny bit more ripped every week for the next three weeks. So at two weeks away from the contest I am 280. I have never been in such awesome shape at that weight. Really, I was looking in the mirror and even I can't believe it.

I travelled to Arizona to stay and train with my friend Dennis James for the last two weeks, and he was freaking out at how I looked. Everything

was just perfect. But something happened to me that I still don't understand. I dropped my carbs very low and in only about three days I lost 15 pounds. I was so flat, but I really didn't notice because I was still ripped. Plus, I was thinking once I carb up, I will be fine again. Once I did start carb loading, I would look full after the first few meals of the day, but by the evening I was flat again— even though I was still eating carbs with every meal! It made no sense and even Chad didn't understand why it was happening. He had never seen anything like it.

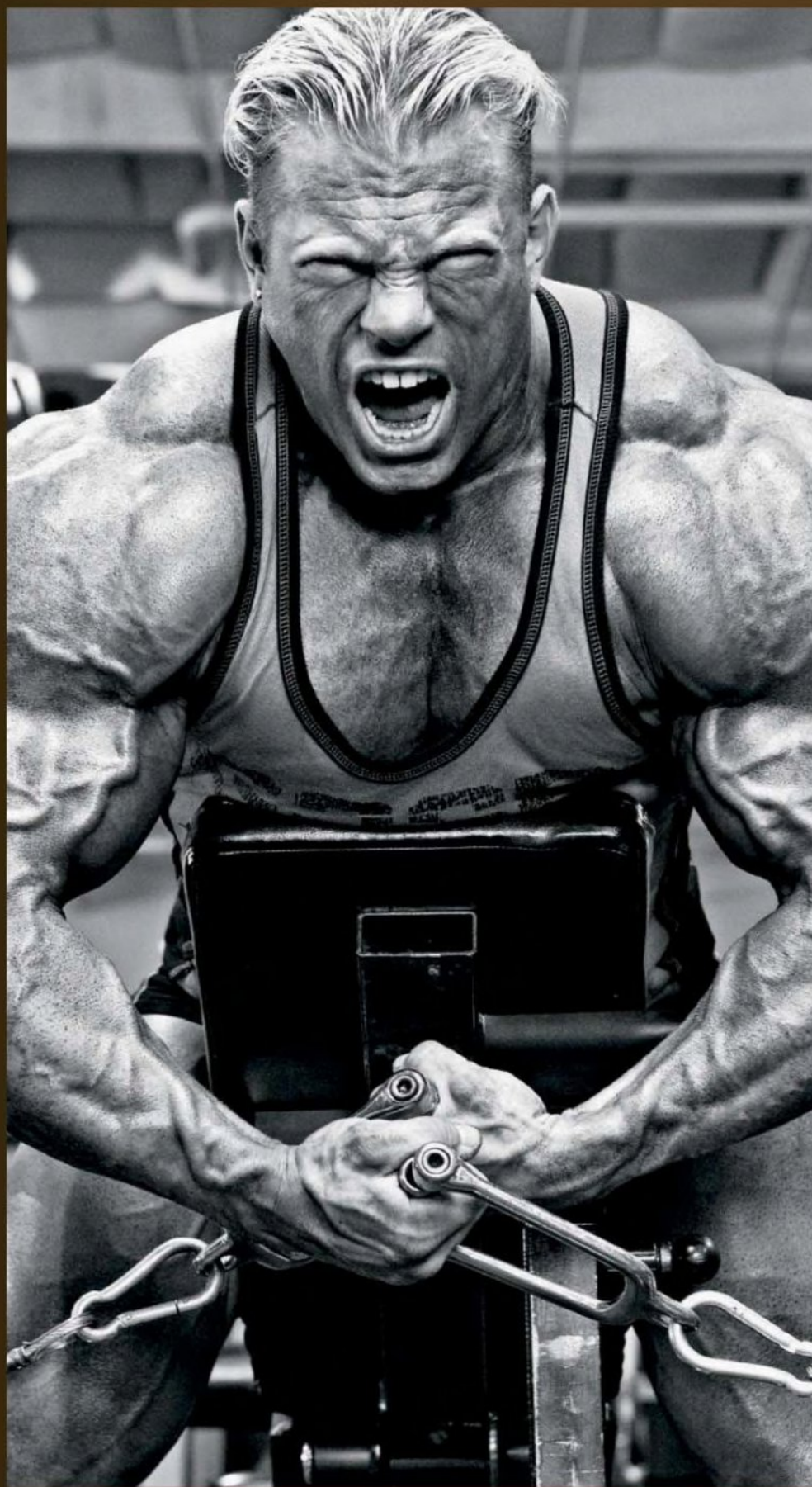
RH: You're a unique individual, I suppose.

DW: Yes, but this is one way I don't want to be different from all the other guys. I am still disappointed almost a year later, anytime I think about it. You can't imagine how frustrating it feels to know I might have won the whole show if only I could have competed the way I looked at five, four, three, or two weeks out. For a month I looked so great, but then at the show nobody believes me and says this Wolf is overrated!

RH: What lessons did you learn from that experience?

DW: I will check my weight and my carbs better this year. I know I can't cut the carbs too low, or it's a disaster for me. I will also start my prep eight weeks before the Olympia, instead of 10— a little bit shorter than last year. You always hear about guys who didn't get in shape in time for the contest, but I am the opposite. I can easily get in shape too fast, and then it's not a sure thing I can keep all my size and fullness long enough. Having a really fast metabolism can be a blessing, but it can also be a curse if you don't know exactly how to work with it.

RH: Even so, there are plenty of us who would love to have that particular curse. Are you working with Chad Nicholls again for this contest? Do you feel he's had a chance to learn a lot about your body and how it responds to different things over the last year?







DW: Yes, we have been working together this whole year. Everything has been working very good that he tells me to do. I have never been this big before, and I have a feeling this year's prep is going to be successful.

RH: In 2008, you still went from 5th place to 4th, even though you were flat. If you come into the 2009 Mr. Olympia at your very best, do you see yourself placing even higher?

DW: This year's Olympia will be the best and the hardest ever, I think. We have a lot of good guys, but nothing is impossible. That's why I will fight and hope to be in better shape and placing than last time. Someone has to win, why not me? There are a few of us who are all good enough, including the guy who has the title now and another who won it twice. I'm not saying I am better than they are, but we are all on the same level, that's all.

RH: How much time do you spend practicing your posing? Guys like Lee Priest have said they actually prefer your slower, more classical style of posing to someone who dances, like Kai or Melvin. Do you ever study old posing routines of guys like Frank Zane or Bob Paris?

DW: When I started competing, I would work on my posing routines for a week or so. Now I do it for a few weeks, but mostly in my head, rather than actually going through the routine in front of a mirror. I start about a month out as I have picked out and made my music. I listen to it over and over again and keep thinking of different things I can do at this part and that part with various poses and transitions. Eventually I know it so well I don't even need to listen to the music anymore.

RH: Do you find it silly when people try to make predictions months ahead of time about who the top five at the Mr. Olympia will be? We usually are assuming either that everyone will look their best ever, or that everyone will have the same weakness-



es they usually do. What do you think about 'Mr. Olympia Predictions?'

DW: I don't want to say that trying to make predictions is stupid, because isn't that what this whole issue of MD is about?

RH: Pretty much.

DW: It's fun to talk about this guy has these strengths and weaknesses and maybe he will beat this guy or get beat. But you never, ever know what's going to happen until the day of the show when we all come out and you see who looks like what. If you saw me two weeks out from the show last year, you would say maybe Dennis wins the whole show! But at the show, I don't look like that anymore. Or maybe you see some other guy a month out from the contest and everyone says, oh man, he is way behind and will never be in good condition. They said this about Kai Greene before the Arnold Classic, and you see what happened. Victor was predicted by many people to win the show, but nobody really can see the future. So you can have interesting debates about who will place first, second, and all that, but it doesn't mean anything. Wait until we come out to make your picks, and then you don't have so long to wait to find out if you are right!

RH: Does it bother you that you lost a couple of months of off-season training time because of your hernia operation?

DW: No, it gave me time to relax and spend more time with my family, plus look into more business things than I usually have time for. Mentally it was good too because it just made me so much hungrier when I get back to the gym to train harder than ever. The only thing that was bad was that I had really wanted to compete in the Arnold Classic this year and I couldn't. Every pro dreams of being in the Olympia—but also the Arnold.

RH: What improvements will we see in your physique from last year?

DW: More overall size, but especially in my back. This is the one place everyone says, *Oh Dennis Wolf is so bad from the back.* So that motivated me to work extra hard on it and it's a lot better than last year. You'll see.

RH: If you had to pick one of these men as your MAIN THREAT to winning the Olympia, who would it be and why?

- Dexter
- Jay
- Phil
- Kai
- Victor

DW: Victor. To me he has the best overall physique out of all those guys. He has no weak body parts at all. If he shows up in his best shape ever, we are all in trouble. And I don't say that to put myself down because I don't have confidence in myself. He's just very, very good. I was very impressed with him in 2007.

RH: This year's Mr. Olympia is being called probably the best lineup the show has had in over 10 years. Do you agree with that?

DW: I do. There are so many great athletes competing this year. Just making the top 10 will be hard to do. And I honestly think anybody who makes the top five this year could win the Olympia. Like I was saying before, the judges are going to have a difficult job. I bet some of the scores between the top five guys will only be a point or two apart.

RH: We also have not had a Mr. Olympia living outside the USA since Dorian retired 12 years ago. Do you think the Mr. O title is ready to return to Europe— and maybe for the first time ever— to Germany?

DW: Oh yes! That would be awesome, not only for me but also for Europe and the rest of the world.





even been competing as a pro for three years. You've only done eight shows in all. One of those was a win, and two of the others were top five at the Mr. Olympia. What I'm getting at is that personally, I don't think you're even close to hitting your prime. How much more potential do you think you have that remains untapped?

DW: That is a hard question for me to answer, because I really don't know. For overall mass, I don't think I need to be much bigger than I am now— maybe five or 10 more pounds. It just comes down to areas of my physique that I still need to make better, and how long it will take me to do that. **Ronnie Coleman** did not have his amazing back when he was starting out in his first couple years as a pro, and that gives me hope that I can improve mine a lot in the next two or three years. I don't know if it will ever be the best back in the sport, but as long as it gets good enough so people stop saying I need more lower lats, I will be

There is a belief in many countries I have been to, and I hear this talking to a lot of athletes, that you have to be in America to get noticed and to get a top placing as a pro. They kind of feel that it doesn't even matter how good they are because they live outside the USA, where the top magazines and most of the contests are. If I won, I think it would show them all that anything is possible if your physique is good enough and it doesn't matter where you are from. The IFBB stands for the 'International' Federation of Bodybuilders, after all.

RH: I think people forget that as of this writing, you have not





happy. I need more hamstrings, more arms, and of course more calves. I won't stop working hard for those, no matter how long it takes. Bodybuilding is what I was meant to do, and I want to do it with all my heart and full efforts.

RH: So you do feel you will be much better in time than you are now?

DW: Oh yes, I will. It's up to me how hard I work to be better, and I have a lot of determination. I will be Mr. Olympia one day. When, I don't know. There are other excellent bodybuilders out there and only one man can win this contest every year. We all have very good genetics, so I think it really matters who wants it more and who will work harder in the gym all year for it. ■


STANDARD
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HUNTING FOR VICTORY

Branch Warren is Tracking His Next Win!

Exclusive Interview by Ron Harris, Photgraphy by Per Bernal

We all love to root for the underdog, don't we? Think about the classic 1976 film "Rocky," in which a broken-down bum from Philly named Rocky Balboa was given a shot at the world heavyweight boxing championship. It was all a huge publicity stunt, and Balboa was never supposed to have a snowball's chance in hell at beating the champ, Apollo Creed. But you've all seen the movie, and its sequels, too. They are just as much a part of most bodybuilders' early inspirational 'blueprint' as "Pumping Iron."

Rocky didn't listen to the sea of voices telling him he was going to be pummeled into hamburger meat by the superior skills of Creed. He put his head down, trained with inhuman effort and dedication, and stepped into the ring, knowing he had done everything possible to prepare for his shot at the big time. And as you know, he went the distance and gave Apollo one hell of a fight.

Branch Warren isn't really so different. Supposedly, he doesn't have what it takes to be Mr. Olympia. He lacks the gifted shape and aesthetics of ***Dexter***, ***Kai***, *and* ***Phil***, *and the structure of* ***Victor***, ***Wolf*** *or* ***Toney***. *But none of the criticisms phase Branch, or deter him from doing what he's always done: train his ass off and show up with loads of thick, gnarly muscle, ripped to the bone.*

Is it any wonder that many of us are pulling for him to upset the 'genetic superiors' he goes up against? Regardless of the outcome at this year's Mr. Olympia, you can be sure that Branch is giving it his all, and he's going into the show with the same steely-eyed focus that makes him a great hunter.



RH: It's been three whole years since you competed in the Mr. Olympia, and the last time you were there was one I think you would rather forget. You were huge, but your condition was off and your color was sort of greenish, if I recall. Do you feel like your last Olympia appearance was one you would definitely not like to be remembered by?

BW: Oh man, that was a nightmare. It was not only the lowest placing I ever had in a pro show, but in any show since I started competing 17 years ago. I trusted people to guide me and did some things I never had in my prep, and it just did not work for me. Luckily, I've had a couple good showings at the Arnold since then, so people have forgotten about that Mr. Olympia in 2006, for the most part.

RH: Luckily, fans do seem to have pretty short memories. You were all set last year to make some real noise at the Olympia when you had that freak accident on your staircase at home and tore your triceps. Would you say that being forced to miss the '08 show makes you that much more eager to get back up on the Olympia stage at your best?

BW: I've never been so eager to do a show before in my life! I was all set to make what would have been my best showing ever at the Olympia and then that shit happened. The way I looked at this year's Arnold was how I would have looked last year. I don't know how well I would have done, but I really think top five was possible. Everything happens for a reason. It just wasn't meant to be in 2008, and it fires me up that much more in the gym for this year.

RH: People talk about how the Mr. Olympia contest now seems like it might be leaning toward guys with prettier shape. But I can think of at least two guys with eight Mr. O titles between them— Dorian and Jay— who were built more along your type: tongs of thick muscle and sick conditioning.

BW: Yeah man, you know the bottom line is that size and muscularity win in bodybuilding. Dexter won last year and he deserved it. He was legitimately the best man onstage that weekend. But he caught Jay on a really off day. If Jay had been in great condition, he would have won his third Mr. Olympia title. Bodybuilding has always been about size. If two guys both have good shape and are both ripped, a 250-pound man will beat a 220-pound man.

You mentioned Dorian, and that was one guy who did not have very pretty shape. Many of the guys who tried to beat him had much better shape:

Flex, Kevin, Shawn, and Labrada. But Dorian crushed them all on size and conditioning. The only guy who almost beat him at his own game was Nasser, toward the end. So I don't listen when I hear people say how you need to be pretty these days to win a pro show or be Mr. Olympia. Whatever.

RH: For a long time, there was the idea that a reigning Mr. Olympia carried a huge advantage going into the show, and it was often said that he couldn't be beaten by a small margin— you had to 'knock him out.' Does it seem to you like that way of thinking is changing now?

BW: I really don't know. That's not up to me, and I don't even think it's something the judges even consider, except maybe subconsciously. I think what you had for so many years were guys holding the title who were just dominant. Men like **Haney**, **Dorian**, and **Ronnie** were at such a different level from their peers that they could be a little bit off and still win. Now you don't have that anymore. But all this talk and speculation is such a waste of time. I don't think about shit like that for a minute. I just do everything I can to look the best I can at the show. Everything else is out of my hands.

RH: Do you miss the old days, though it wasn't that long ago, when everyone was chasing Ronnie? Or do you prefer the way things are now, when no one man seems to be unbeatable and it's more of a case that any one of the top guys can possibly win?

BW: I'm so much happier to be competing right now. It had to be rough in the Ronnie years when the best anyone else could hope for was second place. The guy was just a total freak. Now the playing field is more level. Even at the rest of the pro shows, you have about eight or nine guys out there who win shows. Back in the '90s, there were times when there would only be one or two guys, like I remember at different times it would be **Flex**, or **Kevin**, or **Vince Taylor**, who were just winning everything. The sport is more wide-open for us as pros now and there's more opportunity for different athletes to do well.

RH: If you could choose to compete in any era since the Mr. Olympia contest began in 1965, which time do you think it would be interesting or fun to be part of?

BW: 2009. Seriously. The sport has come so far in the last 40 years, and I'm proud to be doing it right now. This feels like a new era. When was the last time we were weeks away





Branch's Pro Record

2004 Night of Champions	8th place
2004 GNC Show of Strength	4th place
2005 Charlotte Pro	**Winner**
2005 Europa Super Show	**Winner**
2005 Mr. Olympia	8th place
2006 Arnold Classic	2nd place
2006 San Francisco Pro	2nd place
2006 Grand Prix Australia	5th place
2006 Mr. Olympia	12th place
2007 Arnold Classic	7th place
2007 New York Pro	**Winner**
2007 Keystone Classic	4th place
2007 Colorado Pro	7th place
2008 Arnold Classic	4th place
2009 Arnold Classic	3rd place

from the Olympia and talking about four or five guys who all have an equal chance of winning?

RH: I'd have to say— never. What's the best Mr. Olympia contest you ever watched?

BW: Easy— 1998 in New York City, the first year **Ronnie** won. I'll never forget it, because he came into Metroflex the Monday before the show and posed for me and Brian. I had been to a few pro shows, but I had never seen anything like that before. His back was so thick, gnarly, and detailed, the glutes and hams freaky-ripped with striations so deep they were in shadows... I knew right then he was gonna win.

I went home and called up some buddies and told them and they said, oh Branch, he probably looks great by himself, but he'll get killed by guys like **Flex**, **Nasser**, **Shawn**, and **Cormier**. Ronnie had never even made top five before. But I knew. I was in New York five days later, and it felt so good to see him win. I'd watched him train for years and had trained with him at times. Nobody saw him as a threat, and then he just swooped out of nowhere with this crazy new package and became Mr. Olympia. It was something out of a movie.

RH: Are you going to be working with George Farah again for the Olympia? What is it about his approach that you like?

BW: I am. I like George because we have similar personalities and similar approaches to nutrition. We keep things basic, because that's what works and what's easy to manipulate. Once you start making things too complicated, it's hard to correct any errors because there's too much going on. He also doesn't believe in carb depleting and loading, which I never thought made sense anyway.

If you're looking great a week, two weeks before the show, why would you want to change anything? Too many people like to try fixing what isn't broke, and most of the time you end up disappointed with the results. How many times do you see a guy looking awesome a week or two out and then he shows up flat, watery, or both?

RH: All the time. It wasn't too long ago that you told me you were never working with anyone on your prep ever again. What made you change your mind this year?

BW: I just got to talking with him, and he made a lot of sense. I really consult with him on nutrition. My training is handled. But George is a great sounding board and he does come up with a lot of very effective advice.

RH: As a guy who's had to work long and hard to get where you are in the sport today, do you think that could be the main reason so many fans identify more with you than they

do a guy like Phil Heath, who turned pro a couple years after he picked up his first weight, and was on magazine covers when he was still an amateur?

BW: Yeah, I've had a lot of people actually tell me that. I remind the average fan of himself, because my physique did take a very long time to become what it is today. I'm not saying that I don't have great genetics. Obviously, all of us competing in the Mr. Olympia are gifted to some extent. But Phil is almost like another species in the rate that he grew into a world-class bodybuilder.

Even guys like Ronnie and Flex took many years of training before they were at the level to be able to compete at the Arnold Classic and the Mr. Olympia. Phil works hard, I would never say he doesn't, but I think people just recognize and respect that I have put a whole lot of work into getting to this place, and I've had setbacks along the way they can relate to.

RH: Was it a challenge to promote the Branch Warren Classic just 11 weeks out from the Olympia when you are on contest-prep mode yourself?

BW: The show wasn't so tough. It's my third year doing it, so everything went pretty smoothly. A huge part of that is Brian Dobson. I couldn't put that show on without him. Brian's been promoting contests for years and years and has it down to a science. I also have to give it up for Steve Blechman. He said he would support the show, and he really stepped up to the plate. MD did a live webcast and had tons of pictures up on the site, and there will be coverage in the magazine soon, too. I want to make my show the best regional contest in the USA, and this is helping to make that happen.

RH: How about having MD's Robbie Durand, following you around with a camera for a whole week? Was that an experience?

BW: It was cool, but man, I couldn't scratch my ass without it going on camera. Don't print that. (*Sorry Branch, it was too funny to leave out!*) It was good that people saw me doing other things besides training. We went on a night hunt— though it was the first time I can ever remember scratching. We always get something,



but I don't know what was up.

RH: Perhaps Robbie was crashing through the underbrush and scaring all the animals away?

BW: *(laughs)* No, I don't think that was it. We went long-range target shooting too, hitting targets from a thousand yards. It's very different from what most people think of when they picture a shooting range.

RH: Is Trish competing in the Fitness Olympia? Does it make things easier when you're both preparing and dieting at the same time?

BW: It doesn't work for everybody, but it works for us. We eat the same foods; I just eat a lot more. Trish doesn't get moody or anything when she diets. I have my moments, but she knows because I will start getting really quiet. She gives me my space for the time being because she knows I'm just hungry or tired or whatever.

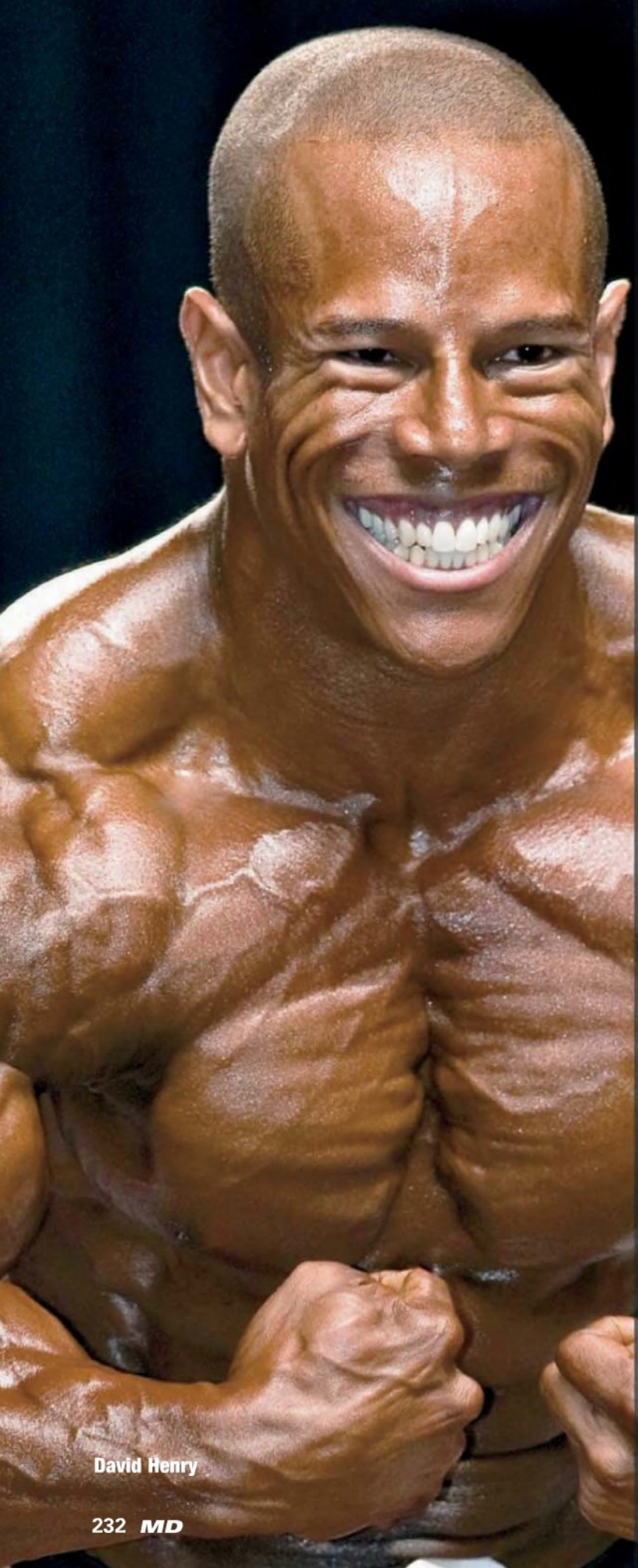
RH: There are so many great competitors going into this year's Mr. Olympia that I think some guys are going to leave Vegas with their feelings hurt. What are you going to do to make sure you're not one of them?

BW: Like I said, the judging is out of my hands. All I can do is show up in the best condition possible and present my physique. I don't worry about the other guys because I have no control over them. I just worry about me. That's always worked. ■

Branch on Past Mr. O's: Speed Round

Larry Scott:
"First Mr. Olympia. Great arms."
Sergio Oliva:
"First real mass monster. Ahead of his time."
Arnold Schwarzenegger:
"The greatest ever."
Franco Columbu:
"Incredible muscularity and a very strong guy."
Frank Zane:
"Small and weak."
Chris Dickerson:
"A shooting star."
Samir Bannout:
"A warrior with tenacious drive."
Lee Haney:
"Mass with Class— there will never be another like him."
Dorian Yates:
"The ultimate warrior of bodybuilding— struck fear into his rivals."
Ronnie Coleman:
"A freak, just unbelievable."
Jay Cutler:
"A guy who never gave up."





David Henry

BATTLE OF THE 202 THE REMATCH

By Ron Harris, Photography by Per Bernal

As you know, unless you've been living in a cave with Osama Bin Laden for the last few months, the Mr. Olympia is shaping up to be a battle of epic proportions, among a field of equally-matched heavy-hitters. But perhaps more exciting is the eagerly-anticipated rematch at the 202 Showdown, which I insist on referring to as the 202 Olympia.

Last year, Kevin English shocked the audience at the New York Pro by trouncing the sensational David Henry. But when they got to Las Vegas later in the season for the final showdown, it was Henry who emerged victorious. Since then, Kevin enlisted the services of MD's own Pro Creator, Hany Rambod, and went to work creating a package of gnarly muscle and sick conditioning that Henry wouldn't be able to handle. Once more, Kevin beat Henry in New York.

Now, weeks away from the Olympia Weekend, the stage is set for a bitter feud between these two phenomenal bodybuilders. Henry wants to repeat 2008 and hold on to his 202 Showdown title, cementing his reputation as the world's best 202-pound physique athlete. But Kevin English has other plans, plans that involve a reversal of last year's result and a world title all his own. I spoke with Kevin in his home in New York, just as he was about to start his diet for the big day in Vegas.

CAN DAVE HENRY HOLD OFF KEVIN ENGLISH AT THE OLYMPIA?

RH: Kevin, congratulations on winning the 202s at the New York Pro for the second year in a row. I'm just curious— why didn't you do any other shows this spring? Wasn't the Pittsburgh show right around the same time?

KE: Yes, it was a week or two before the New York Pro, but I really wanted to focus on the New York show 100 percent. I knew David Henry was going to be there again, and I had to redeem myself after losing to him last fall at the Olympia. I didn't look anywhere near as good there as I should have, and it really bothered me. A lot of people said it was just a fluke that I was able to beat him that one time earlier in the year in New York, so I wanted to show that I was capable of doing it again.

RH: There's one thing I wanted to know your opinion on. The prejudging for the 202 Olympia Showdown is being held on the stage over at the Expo. You still have your finals at the Orleans Arena— but do you feel as if your judging should take place there too, just as it does for the Mr. Olympia?

KE: Last year, both the judging and the finals were held at the Expo. They actually did it all together with no break, which was really bizarre. In all the contests I have done since I started competing, I've never seen that. Obviously, we don't enjoy having the show there. I think it makes the contest look more like a



Kevin English



2008 Mr. Olympia



spectacle, like— *hey, come on over from the booths and check this out*! It just doesn't seem like the event is taken as seriously when it's there.

We are doing our routines there again this time, but then on Saturday night the top five will have our pose-down and awards during the Mr. Olympia. So that's a step up. The 202 class is growing pretty fast. This year we're seeing guys come down from the Open. Mark Dugdale did it, and I heard Ronny Rockel is switching over, too.

RH: I didn't know that— good for him! He was really being ignored in the Open class anyway. There are a lot more 202 shows this year than last year too, right?

KE: I think there were only a total of three last year, and this year there are seven. So more than double— that's pretty rapid growth.

RH: Kevin, could you break down what you feel your own strengths and weaknesses are— and then do the same thing regarding your main rival, Mr. David Henry?

KE: I think my mindset is my greatest strength. Almost my whole physique is strong. My arms, legs, delts, and chest are all very good; my back has come up a lot. If I had to pinpoint anything as being kind of weak, it would be my abs and my calves.

As for Dave Henry, I take nothing away from the man. He's a complete animal and one of the greatest bodybuilders under 220 pounds the sport has ever seen. Dave has brought up his legs a lot, but they still don't have a real nice outer sweep to the quads. I think that's mainly a genetic thing, like my calves. I'm sure he hits his quads hard, just like I blast my calves with no mercy. But they are a challenge.

Dave also has great stage presence and looks totally confident up there. One of his big strengths is his freaky conditioning, but that can also be his weakness. Everybody expects him to be dry, grainy and striated all over, and if he shows up just a little blurry in the

Kevin English Contest History

1996 Atlantic States	2nd, Middleweights
1998 Atlantic States	Middleweight & Overall Champion
1998 Junior Nationals	Middleweight & Overall Champion
1998 NPC Nationals	Middleweight Champion (Pro status)
2000 Night of Champions	14th place
2006 New York Pro	17th place
2008 New York Pro	2nd Open, Under 202 Champion
2008 202 Showdown	2nd place
2008 Mr. Olympia	16th place
2009 New York Pro	Under 202 Champion

glutes and hams, he's off. But I'm not worried even if he does bring that trademark condition, because mine is going to be better than anything you've ever seen from me before. Dave might be an animal, but I'm a beast!

RH: Right on. You have competed at well over 202 pounds before and I know you have been over 270 in the off-season many times. How hard is it for you to get down to 202 now? Dave, I understand you had a pretty rough time at the New York show making weight?

KE: It's extremely hard! Naturally, my normal off-season weight is right around 265. It's very easy for me to carry that weight. I have been trying to keep my weight down in the low 240s since the New York show, and it's a struggle. My body just wants to grow. I have been getting stronger in all my exercises and it's clear that the muscles want to grow. But my diet starts Saturday, at 11 weeks out. With my calories lower, my weight will start coming down gradually.

RH: Could this show be your last appearance in the 202s?

KE: I've really been debating that in my mind quite a bit lately. I know I could be around 225 or 230 pounds completely diced, but then what? Some people have advised me to just stay in the 202s and dominate that division. But the bigger money is in the Open shows. The

David Henry's Pro Record

2004 Pro Iron Man	6th place
2004 San Francisco Pro	8th place
2004 Orlando Pro	10th place
2005 Pro Iron Man	7th place
2005 Arnold Classic	12th place
2005 San Francisco Pro	17th place
2005 Toronto Pro	17th place
2005 Wildcard Showdown	**Winner**
2005 Europa Pro/Dallas	4th place
2005 Mr. Olympia	14th place
2006 Pro Iron Man	2nd place
2006 Arnold Classic	11th place
2006 Colorado Pro	3rd place
2006 New York Pro	4th place
2006 Mr. Olympia	Did not place
2007 Pro Iron Man	6th place
2007 Arnold Classic	14th place
2007 Atlantic City Pro	3rd place
2007 Mr. Olympia	10th place
2008 Pro Iron Man	12th place
2008 Arnold Classic	12th place
2008 New York Pro	4th place
2008 New York Pro 202	2nd place
2008 Tampa Bay Pro	3rd place
2008 Tampa Bay Pro 202	**Winner**
2008 Mr. Olympia	15th place
2008 Mr. Olympia 202 Showdown	**Winner**
2009 New York Pro 202	3rd place







question is, how would I do, even with all that muscle? I am still the same height and I do have a fairly small frame, compared to the bigger guys. I see a guy like Silvio who has a lot of size and comes in peeled, but he doesn't do as well in the Open class as you would think he would. I'm really at a crossroads. What do you think?

RH: Wow, putting me on the spot. Honestly, I think you could do very well at the smaller shows and would probably win a few of those before it's all said and done. But I suspect your relative lack of height and smaller frame would cause you to get overlooked at shows like the Arnold and the Olympia. I saw it happen to Lee Priest for years. But it's a rough choice for you. Seriously, how low do you have to take your calories to get down to 202 pounds?

KE: I won't get into all the details, but let's just say I go to bed starving every night.

RH: Huh— like the kids in the commercials where they want us to send money.

KE: Not quite. I have food— I just can't eat it. I drink a lot of cold water to fill me up so the hunger pangs aren't so bad. But being hungry is not something I'm used to.

RH: Speaking of sleep, how much do you average a night?

KE: I don't need eight hours like most people. Usually I go to bed at 10 or 11 and I'm up at 2:15 a.m. or 2:30 to eat and get to the gym for my first client at 4 a.m. I also take a nap during the day. I can do pretty well with about five hours of sleep total a day.

RH: God bless you, because I would be a wreck. For a few years in the 1970s, they had separate judging for an under 200-pound Mr. Olympia and an over; then at the end they would bring both onstage to determine the Overall. Everybody saw this happen near the end of the movie "Pumping Iron." If the 202 division keeps growing, do you see that possibly coming back?

KE: Really, what would be the point? At the Mr. Olympia, I don't see a 202-pound giving a much larger guy a serious run for the big title. I would like to see it done at the smaller shows though, since we aren't allowed to cross over into the Open

THE STATS!

	Kevin English	Dave Henry
Height:	5'4"	5'5"
Weight:	202-260	202-235
Age:	35	34
Best body part:	Arms, legs	Back, arms, chest
Weak point:	Abs, calves	Legs
Pro since:	1998	2002
Pro shows:	6	30
Pro wins:	2	3



anymore.

RH: Personally, I would have loved to see you pose down against Evan Centopani. Nothing against Ruhl or Dennis, but I think you would have compared well, just like you did last year against Kai.

KE: I would have liked that opportunity, too. Evan had over 50 pounds on me, but I would have held my own.

RH: Aside from you and Dave Henry, who else do you see in the 202s right now who could eventually be a real contender for the 202 Olympia title?

KE: Definitely, I see Flex Lewis doing that in a couple years. He's still a young guy and he has room to grow in the class. I'm pretty sure he was only around 190 or so last year, or maybe lighter. Mark Dugdale is very good, too. I mentioned Ronny Rockel coming to the 202 class before. Ronny has a great physique, killer shape and symmetry.

RH: What about Lee Priest, if he comes back next year?

KE: If he comes back— and I really wonder if he will— he would definitely be a threat, based on what he's accomplished in the sport already. I know Lee has battled all the greats like Dorian, Ronnie, Shawn, Flex, and Kevin. It would be an honor to stand up there with him. But he hasn't competed in a few years now. I have to wonder if his body would still respond the same way and if his heart is still in it.

RH: All true, and I guess we just have to wait and see what he does. Have you made any major changes to your training or nutrition programs this year?

KE: My nutrition is what's gone through the biggest metamorphosis since last year. Hany has me eating much cleaner in the off-season, and he makes sure I am totally on top of my supplements like BCAAs, fish oil and CLA— just things I was never consistent with in the past. When it comes to training, I always bust my butt. I treat every workout like it's my last one ever. Lately it's just all been coming together so well. I know that I was not living up to my full potential as a bodybuilder before, so now I am making sure I put everything I can into every aspect of being a bodybuilder.

RH: Last question. What would the winning 202 Olympia title mean to you?

KE: It would mean everything. Winning the New York Pro 202 for the last two years was great, but it's not the same thing. Holding the 202 Olympia title states definitely that I am the best 202-pound bodybuilder in the world right now. I know I am, and I've already beaten the reigning champion, but it's not official until I do it in Las Vegas and claim that actual title. It's like other sports with weight divisions, MMA or boxing. I want that recognition as the best 202 man in bodybuilding. I think it could open up other avenues for me, and I can't wait to make it happen. ►

THE CHAMP SPEAKS:

Dave Henry Plans on Keeping His 202 Showdown Title!



Dave Henry has always been an intense man, driven and focused. The Dave I spoke to at 10 weeks out from the 202 Showdown at the Olympia Weekend wasn't the same one I knew back when he was with MD. He's more relaxed, confident, and seems at peace with himself and with the sport. The new Dave Henry rolls with the punches, which is why getting beaten by Kevin English for the second consecutive year in New York doesn't have him too riled up. When it comes to the big show, the world title to determine the best 202-pound bodybuilder alive, Dave sees his hand as the one being raised in victory on that stage in Las Vegas.

RH: You set a very high standard of coming in totally peeled all over, top to bottom and front to back. Now, if you don't always look exactly like that, people say you're 'off.' So my question would be, is achieving that condition a double-edged sword, because from that point on it's what they expect to see from you at every show?

DH: Yes, and that's great! I put myself in that position. My job is to get to that high standard now, and I am capable of it. The problem in New York was that I put too much emphasis on 'I have to win this show,' when I should have been more calm. But still, I thought I looked pretty good. The crowd voiced their displeasure when I was announced in third place. A lot of people told me they had me second at worst, and some also had me winning.

RH: Do you predict that 2009 will be repeat of '08, meaning Kevin won an early battle in New York, but you will win the war in Vegas?

DH: It's a different atmosphere at the Olympia Weekend, and you have a panel of international judges. I also have a better mindset going in as the defending champion rather than someone still trying to get that number-one spot.

RH: You're still training DC style, and I give you props for that. I did it for two years and it is a bitch.

DH: Like they say, it's not for the timid. DC training breaks people. I'm proof that you can use it successfully in the long term if you do it the right way, with blasts broken up by 'cruise' periods. I'm still beating the numbers in my logbook, meaning I continue to get stronger. Sometimes it blows my mind how much stronger I have gotten over the years.

RH: You've also packed on more muscle thickness, yet you still manage to get down to 202 pounds. How do you gain more muscle and stay the same weight?

DH: It's a struggle, and it also shows what an illusion bodybuilding really is. Getting down to 202 is an enormous challenge for me now, but I relish it. I've also put on the size without increasing my waistline at all. It's still 30 inches, and I welcome anyone with a tape measure to come up and see for himself.

RH: Your legs have also come up, which was the area you have taken the most heat over.

DH: I talked about illusion, and having a great outer thigh sweep, which is mainly genetic, gives the illusion of much bigger legs. Conversely, without a pronounced sweep, the quads don't appear to be as large. Darrem Charles, for example, does not have a great sweep but his legs are not small at all. But my training, partner Scott Stevenson, has helped me come up with a winning strategy in my leg training. I've been going for myofascial stretching and deep tissue work every other week. The vastus medialis really pops now. I even had people in New York tell me that my legs overshadowed [Mark] Dugdale's.

RH: Not easy, because his legs are very good. Assuming you do win again, which wouldn't surprise me, who are some of the up-and-coming guys in the 202 that could give you a run next year if they continue to improve?

DH: Oh yeah, Kevin could win the show, and Flex Lewis will win it eventually once he fills out a bit more. But I won't be in the 202s anymore by then. I want to get out of there on my own terms, go out on top, and not because I'm being forced out. I'll move on to the open, knowing that I held the top position in that class in the world for a period of time. I have placed top 10 at the Mr. Olympia before, and I plan on doing it again. I can't see any of the other 202 guys being able to do that right now.

RH: Before I let you go and wish you good luck at defending your title against Kevin and the others, would you like to thank anyone?

DH: I couldn't do all this without the help of my beautiful wife and number-one fan, Nicki. Scott Stevenson has been an awesome training partner for the past six years, and for the last couple seasons Scott has also been helping with my nutrition. And no, he is not available for anyone else to work with on prep!

Thanks to Dante Trudel of www.intensemuscle.com for giving me the blueprint and guidance to take my physique from a middleweight to where it is now.

And finally, I have to thank MuscleTech, the greatest sponsor in the world. I've been with them almost five years and I just re-signed for a multiyear deal that will probably take me all the way to the end of my competitive career as a pro bodybuilder. ■

COMING SOON...



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The Style of Iris Kyle

By Cheri Owen, Photography by Per Bernal

Like the radiant springtime flower that is her namesake, Iris Kyle also enjoys the full sun. Having warmed to the spotlight at an early age, she competed in her first show, the 1994 Iron Maiden Championships, placing second as a middleweight. Since turning professional at the 1998 NPC USA Championships, she has graced the stage in full bloom: the only woman to win both the Ms. International title and the Ms. Olympia title in 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, and trying again for her fifth Ms. Olympia in 2009 after already winning this year's Arnold Classic. She has dominated women's bodybuilding for the past five years.

Iris is a hearty variety: the second youngest of six children, born in Benton Harbor, Michigan on August 22, 1974. Before becoming an IFBB professional, Iris received her associate's degree in Business Administration from Alcorn State University. Iris didn't lay roots in this field, instead relocating to California to pursue her love of fitness. The first time she saw a photograph of **Lenda Murray**, she describes herself as, "in complete awe— so I cut out the picture and placed it on my refrigerator. From that point on, my goal was to develop a physique like hers. With my 'ideal' physique in mind, I stepped up my training to a whole new level and became a woman possessed, hammering away at







the weights almost nonstop, honing my nutritional and dietary knowledge."

Iris describes herself as "a child of God with a lot of 'pizzazz'!" This extends to the stage, always wearing red or blue, her two favorite colors. When she is not training, she enjoys the beach, hanging out at home with her two dogs (Sadie and Chelsea), and vacation resorts. She considers herself to be a private yet extremely generous person, thankful to her sponsors, PNP Perfect Nutrition, based in Germany and owned by Ali Aslan, as well as her family, friends and fans. She gives the most credit to God as her mentor, who has given her the "royal bloodline to have the passion, perseverance and the patience to endure challenges that have been set before her."

Today, Iris trains steadily, with the same intensity, making her home in Houston, Texas. In the midst of the summer garden, the Iris stands alone as a glorious flower, loved for its vibrant shape. As she puts it—why fix something if it isn't broken? With a sexy 5'7" physique and measurements of 36"-26"-36", Iris' off-season weight is 175 pounds, with a competition weight of 160-162 pounds. She is a daunting presence on the stage, lithe and powerful, and fiercely competitive. A true champion, she describes herself as never being satisfied and always seeking improvement in her structure. Iris is a perennial athlete, returning year after year to weed out her competitors. As she prepares to defend her Ms. Olympia crown, let's stop and pose with Iris.

CO: Tell me a little about Iris.

IK: I keep life as simple as repeating my name, that's the game I play. I'm a smooth-sailing symbol of pride, dignity and mobility, a definite leader, charming, charismatic, confident, graceful, creative, dramatic, determined, extremely generous, enthusiastic, and forever direct. I can be very stubborn, sensitive, and arrogant. But at the same time, I have a good nature and a persuasive smile that can brighten anyone's day!

CO: What projects are you working on?

IK: Cathy LeFrancois and I have managed to form an awesome team and have had a great relationship over the past two years. Cathy is one of the best women athletes and representatives in the sport. We are working on hosting our first fitness minicamp, called ICMuscles, held in California.

ICMuscles will provide our services to athletes or individuals who are simply interested in changing their way of living. We are in search of sponsors. Anyone interested can contact Cathy at CathyLeFrancois@aol.com or myself at msbunns01@sbcglobal.net or ultimate-chocolate@sbcglobal.net.

CO: What is your relationship status?

IK: I'm not married, but in a relationship.

CO: How long did you train prior to your first competition?

IK: A local promoter suggested I enter a competition he was hosting in 10 weeks. I used the contest as a focal point, as a further incentive to train even harder. I wanted something out of the norm, something that only a few could accomplish. I remember thinking backstage at that first show, "What the heck did I get myself into?" Am I really going to walk onstage in a bikini, in front of an audience of strangers, and pose? I did— and I won that show. I thought I had conquered the world.

CO: What do you enjoy about being an IFBB bodybuilding professional?

IK: I'm honored to be a part of such a small, elite class of female athletes. Words cannot begin to describe the love I have, watching my physique transform. It's an artistic form of the human anatomy that shares no gender.

CO: Tell me how it feels to compete.

IK: Once being onstage, you have to know how to shine. Therefore, I feel very much in control showing no evidence of intimidation. At this point in my career, being the one to beat is very rewarding within itself, but if you allow it, you can experience mountains of stress. My mind is at peace where I'm in total control. My only question when I compete is what will the judges do with me today? I realize at the end of the day, if I handled my requirements during preparation mode, then my job is complete and everything else is out of my control.

CO: How did it feel to beat Lenda Murray in 2004 at the Ms. Olympia?

IK: This is a milestone in my career. Even after receiving my professional status, I envisioned duplicating Murray's exact physique, while adding a few other key components. To have the opportunity to compete against a legend was amazing. I told Lenda in a live interview backstage, that today was my day and she should have stayed in retirement because she will have to settle for second fiddle! When my name was announced as winning first place, my heart had to skip a hundred miles per second and it was unbelievable to dethrone the





champ at her game. I felt like I was on an untouchable cloud and that I had made history in the sport, that I was the one to beat the legend.

CO: How does it make you feel to have won the Ms. International and the Ms. Olympia three times in the same year?

IK: Wow-wee!!!! Time brings wisdom and patience, both of which reveal themselves at a different stage of our lives. What I have endured as a competitor and female bodybuilder is nothing short of amazing: words cannot begin to express the emotional buildup after hearing your name announced constantly as the winner. Dominating the circuit winning two shows a year really hasn't set in yet; I am still numb to the number of times I've accomplished it. Wherever I shall land from this day forward, Iris Kyle has left a great mark and I'm sure as years pass and my days expire, another athlete will aim to conquer my milestone. Records are made to be broken. Therefore, with that being said, it's a wonderful feeling to be a part of history in your chosen sport.

CO: Which contest has been most memorable for you as an amateur or a pro and why?

IK: Cheri, don't make me laugh... LOL! Beating Lenda Murray was and will remain the highlight of my entire career in the sport.

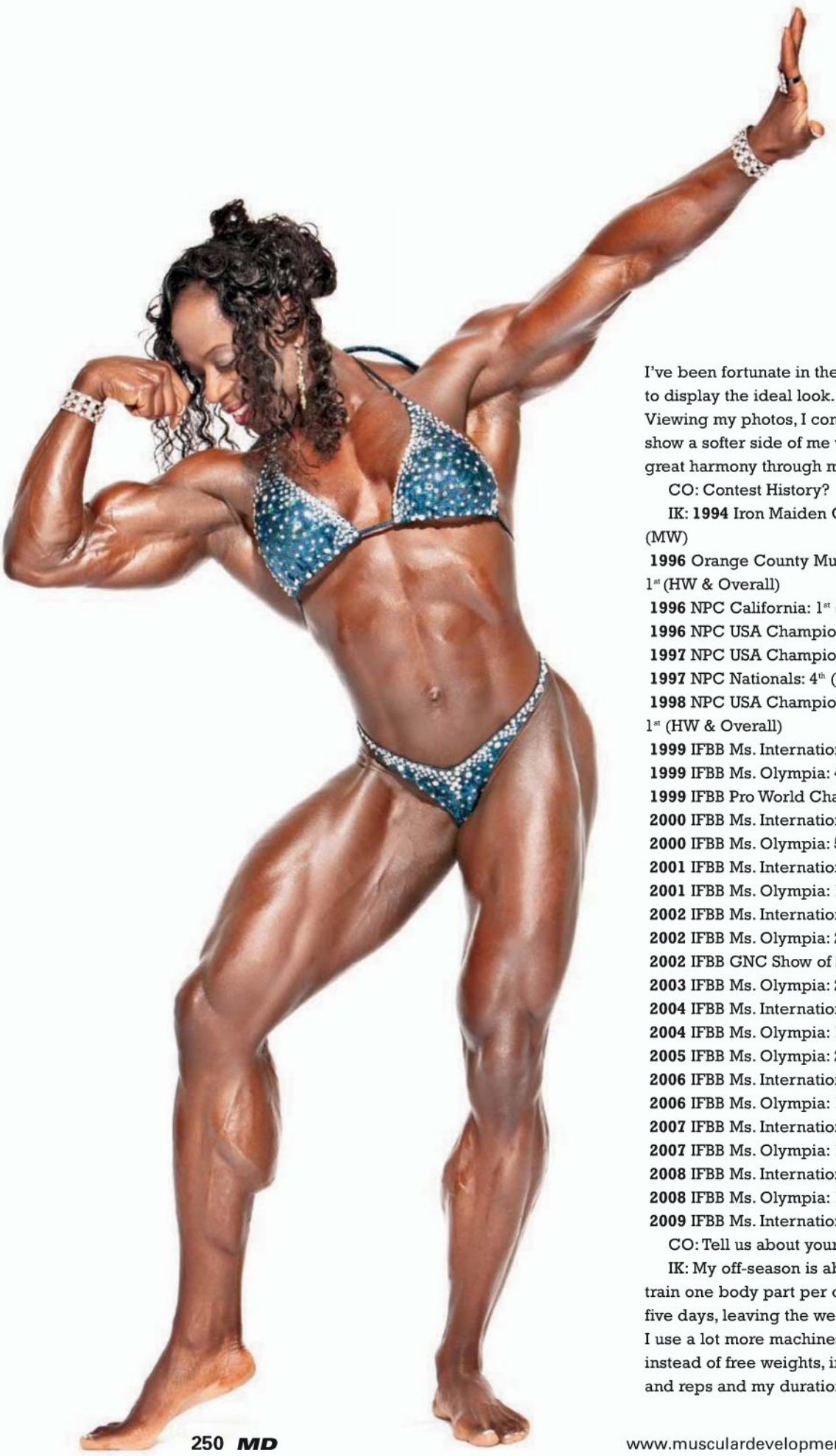
CO: How is your prep coming for the Ms. Olympia?

IK: All surroundings vanish, including traveling. I like to isolate myself, and total concentration is a must, keeping my eyes on the prize. At this point in my career, I have no room for error. Twelve weeks of preparation is ideal and realistic to display a winning physique.

CO: At the Arnold this year— when I compared your pictures from last year— you had a different look. What look do you plan to bring to the Ms. Olympia in September?

IK: The bottom line is, you have to be content with what you think is idealistic, keeping in mind you definitely have to gain the judges' approval. By the grace of God,





I've been fortunate in the majority of the contests to display the ideal look. I set the standards. Viewing my photos, I concluded I needed to show a softer side of me while still displaying great harmony through my physique.

CO: Contest History?

IK: **1994** Iron Maiden Championships: 2nd (MW)
1996 Orange County Muscle Classic: 1st (HW & Overall)
1996 NPC California: 1st (HW & Overall)
1996 NPC USA Championships: 2nd (HW)
1997 NPC USA Championships: 3rd (HW)
1997 NPC Nationals: 4th (HW)
1998 NPC USA Championships: 1st (HW & Overall)
1999 IFBB Ms. International: 15th
1999 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 4th
1999 IFBB Pro World Championship: 2nd
2000 IFBB Ms. International: disqualified
2000 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 5th (HW)
2001 IFBB Ms. International: 2nd (HW)
2001 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 1st (HW)
2002 IFBB Ms. International: 2nd (HW)
2002 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 2nd (HW)
2002 IFBB GNC Show of Strength: 2nd (HW)
2003 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 2nd (HW)
2004 IFBB Ms. International: 1st (HW & Overall)
2004 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 1st (HW & Overall)
2005 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 2nd
2006 IFBB Ms. International: 1st
2006 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 1st
2007 IFBB Ms. International: 1st
2007 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 1st
2008 IFBB Ms. International: 7th
2008 IFBB Ms. Olympia: 1st Overall
2009 IFBB Ms. International: 1st & Overall

CO: Tell us about your workout schedule.

IK: My off-season is about training to sustain. I train one body part per day over the course of five days, leaving the weekend free for recovery. I use a lot more machines during the off-season, instead of free weights, implement fewer sets and reps and my duration time in the gym is 45

minutes tops. HOORAY!!!!!! Once contest prep rolls around, I train two body parts per day and vary dropsets, supersets, and "phase" free weights back in my regimen.

CO: What do you consider your best feature?

IK: My best features or features are Me, Myself and I, No I'm kidding! I would have to say my entire backside from head to toes are key components to my physique. Complete balance is my goal.

CO: What kind of music do you prefer to listen to? Your favorite band or artists?

IK: I listen to it all. My preference will start, definitely with R&B, jazz, and sensible rap, trance while doing cardio, Reggae Man, and I definitely have to have Santana in me. Rock-n-roll has its place, too!

CO: What are you likes and dislikes in life?

IK: My likes are that life is a gift from God and is beautiful, freedom of choice, with endless options. I have come to a place where I am the only one and God, who's truly responsible for initiating and controlling the outcome and destination of my happiness, is what I love about life. Everything else is secondary, or rather has no place in my life. My dislikes are everyone is everywhere but never where they should be, adding their personal attacks, prejudices, judgments, assumptions, opinions and perceptions, jealousy, disrespect and discrediting.

CO: What is your favorite food on-season and off-season?

IK: Fish and broccoli, turkey and rice. Off-season includes oatmeal pancakes, sushi chocolate cake, and Fuzzy's pizza— meat-lovers with extra meat on thick crust. Yummy!

CO: What motivates you?

IK: God motivates me. I learn that trials and hardships are really training tools for growth, maturity, and for the development of character.

CO: Finish this sentence: If I were not Iris Kyle, the reigning Ms. Olympia, I would like to be…

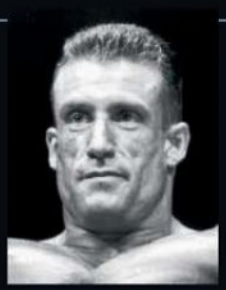
IK: Iris Kyle, the great tennis or golf professional of all time! ■



DORIAN YATES

BLOOD&GUTS

By Dorian Yates



MD is immensely proud to welcome one of bodybuilding's true icons to our family. In addition to winning the Mr. Olympia six times, Dorian Yates is respected as one of the hardest-training bodybuilders who has ever lived. Equally feared for his keen intellect and unwavering discipline as he was for his incredible physique during his Olympia reign, Dorian is widely considered to be one of the most knowledgeable men in the industry when it comes to areas such as training, nutrition, the psychology of bodybuilding and more. It's been a long time coming, but at last we are able to bring you the man once known as 'The Shadow'— the one and only ***Dorian Yates!***

A Historic Mr. Olympia for 2009

It's been quite some time since the Mr. Olympia was considered as a 'wide-open' show where any number of top competitors had an equal chance to win the ultimate title. For well over 20 years, either the incumbent champion was the heavy favorite, or he had one particular man hot on his heels.

Lee Haney had guys like **Rich Gaspari** and **Lee Labrada** chasing after him, but not until I came along in 1991 did he face someone who could rival him in terms of mass and size. During my six-year reign from 1992 to 1997, I was always touted as the favorite to repeat, though I did have some excellent challengers like **Flex Wheeler**, **Shawn Ray**, **Kevin Levrone**, and **Nasser**, who all gave me a run for the money at various times.



When I retired, Flex was supposed to be the heir apparent, but we all know life, and even this sport, can be full of surprises. **Ronnie Coleman** ruled the bodybuilding world for eight long years just as Haney had, with only **Jay Cutler** threatening to beat him. Jay did finally get his day in the sun, and won a Sandow of his own by beating Ronnie. But he only held on to the title for two years. Now we have Dexter Jackson as Mr. Olympia, and only time will tell how long he is destined to sit in that throne.

This month, I will review who I feel is most likely to be in contention for the title, as well as those who have an excellent chance of making the top 10. It will all come down to who shows up in his best shape, of course, so the order I present them in should not be considered a prediction carved in stone of where I believe the men will place.

Dexter Jackson

Dexter is sort of like a Hollywood sequel— you always know pretty much what you're gonna get even before you see it. He's often called 'Mr. Consistency,' and with good reason. Dexter is always in great shape, give or take a couple percent. He may look a little better than what you expect, or a tad worse, but it's never a big difference either way. He's also done a good job of very gradually adding size over the years, while maintaining his pleasing shape and small midsection.

I felt he was a good pick for the winner last year. Now the question is, can he win again this year? His weakness is an overall lack of stature and size, which could be his undoing if he comes up against a larger man with equally impressive shape and condition. There is an old saying that in bodybuilding, a good big man always beats a good small man. It could happen this year— or once again, Dexter could be the one with the best overall package onstage.

Jay Cutler

With two Mr. Olympia titles already and coming into this show as last year's runner-up, Jay is capable of turning the tables on Dexter. His weak point over the last few years has been coming in too heavy. It's been a while since Cutler has competed in great condition. He was not gifted with the best structure, and additional size doesn't seem to help matters.



The bigger Jay gets, and the worse his conditioning is, the more he appears to be square and blocky. I feel his best bet would be to forget about trying to be as huge as possible and focus on dialing in his condition again. Coming in 10 or even 15 pounds lighter would probably do the trick. From the front, Jay looks to be in decent shape, but once he turns around, it's a different story. His back

is wide and thick, but not even close to being in contest condition with all the clear separation and detail it should be showing.

If Jay can achieve that look, he does have a legitimate shot at getting the title back. Mr. Olympia is supposed to be the best bodybuilder in the world and strong in all departments. You shouldn't have amateurs out there competing with much better condition than Mr. Olympia. This is the key to Jay's success or failure, so we'll soon see whether or not he realizes that and addresses the issue.

Kai Greene

Next on my list is Kai, simply for the fact that he won the Arnold and beat Victor earlier this year. He's really the first guy since Ronnie to really impress me with his blend of size and shape. Kai also has a tremendous back, with super low lats and a small waist. Though posing isn't a make it or break it factor at the Mr. Olympia, Kai does put on one hell of a show when he's out there and definitely gets your attention.



As far as his condition, I've seen it very good but not quite to the level I think he's capable of yet. It was still good enough to beat Victor Martinez, who was the heavy favorite to win the Arnold. The question with Kai at this point is: will he be able to duplicate or hopefully even improve on the condition he had at the Arnold Classic? If so, he could potentially win the Olympia this year.

Complicating that question is the fact that there isn't a whole lot of time between the Arnold and the Olympia, and timing your peak for two events a few months apart can be tricky business. We saw how it affected Ronnie the year he tried to do both shows in 2001, and wound up looking much better at the Arnold. There have also been a lot of new demands on Kai's time since he won. He's been very much in demand for various appearances, and the traveling takes a huge toll on anyone's training.

Another thing to consider is how much Kai's bodyweight seems to fluctuate. Reportedly he had to drop a lot of weight in the final weeks before the Arnold, and then immediately afterward he got very heavy again in a short time. That's a lot of stress on the body. Some have said Kai needs to make improvements to areas like his upper chest, shoulders, and triceps before he can win the Mr. Olympia. Not only do I think that's unrealistic to expect in such a short time since the Arnold, but I don't really believe it's necessary. All the guys have their weaknesses if you want to really nitpick. Kai has what it takes to win this show, provided he shows up in excellent condition.

Victor Martinez

Victor is a man who also could conceivably win the Mr. Olympia this year if he comes in at his absolute best. At the Arnold Classic, the lingering effects of his knee injury from 2008 were still evident. One quad was noticeably smaller than the other. And as good as Victor is, I have yet to see him come in totally shredded. He was close to it in 2007 when he took second to Cutler, but a good 10 percent off the mark at the Arnold.



Can he improve his quad balance and finally nail his condition the way we've always hoped he would? If he can, Victor may just fulfill Ronnie's prediction from a few years back when he said he saw Martinez as a future Mr. O to carry on his legacy. Victor has the size, the shape, and the structure to defeat Dexter if he can beat 'The Blade' at his own game: condition.

Just as I was putting this month's column together, Victor's sister had been murdered. My condolences go out to him and his family. Preparing for the Mr. Olympia under those circumstances won't be easy, but Victor is a warrior and I trust he will persevere through this, as he has with previous hardships.

Phil Heath

Phil is a guy who came up very rapidly through the ranks, but he is proving to have more staying power than previous 'overnight success' stories. Like Dexter, he's quite consistent with his conditioning and it's one of his greatest advantages. His only real weakness is structural, as his clavicles aren't terribly wide. It's more noticeable in some poses than others, but you do notice it, even with all the mass he's managed to pack onto his frame.



Phil also doesn't have as much muscle density and muscle maturity as some of the other guys who have been doing this a lot longer than he has— which is pretty much all of them. But with that being said, Heath has shown marked improvements each year and even in the same year from spring to fall. He will no doubt be bigger and better than last time, since he has had an entire year to train and prepare for this Mr. Olympia. I would say that Dexter, Jay, Kai, and Victor all could definitely win the show this year, but I would not rule out Heath, either.

Dennis Wolf

Hopefully I haven't riled up any Dennis Wolf fans by discussing him after Phil, because I could easily see either one beating the other this year. Dennis made a huge impact back at the 2007 Mr. Olympia and was immediately proclaimed as being a potential Mr. Olympia winner in the near future. He had the height, the width, and the structure of a world champion, with good size for his frame as well.



Wolf's weak points are shallow development in the mid and lower back, and calves that are too small for his quads and hams. I still think he needs more overall size for his large frame. Another troubling aspect with

Dennis is how he regressed in 2008 in size. I have to wonder if his increased appearance and traveling schedule had anything to do with that.

Often when a guy is an amateur, his training and eating are both done to the best of his ability because there's little else to interfere. But when a man turns pro and especially if he's presented with bountiful opportunities to make money, it's tough to say no. All that traveling is wonderful for your career and gets you out to see all your fans, but it plays havoc with your workouts and meals.

Another 'side effect' of success in bodybuilding is that you have gurus and even armchair experts telling you what to do and suggesting new things, instead of simply staying with the methods you used as an amateur to prepare for contests. My feeling has always been that if you have successfully gotten into shape doing it one way, don't change it. I'm very interested to see what Dennis brings to the Mr. Olympia this year, because I do feel he has tremendous untapped potential.

Branch Warren

Branch is one of the most thickly-developed men in the sport, past or present. He trains brutally heavy, and you can see that just by looking at his rugged physique. He's also done a brilliant job of balancing his upper and lower body, which was not easy, considering how overpowering his legs were just a few short years ago. Branch also comes in very hard and vascular, but he does lack deep separation and detail in the muscles. This is only speculation on my part, but I suspect it might be a reflection of his training style. From what I have seen, he doesn't use a full range of motion very often, and he doesn't seem to include many isolation movements, instead relying more on heavy compound exercises. Again, this is just the impression I get from what I've seen.



If this is the case, Branch could feasibly make significant improvements in muscle separation and detail with some modifications to his training. With those improvements, I think Branch would stand a much better chance of being in real contention for the Mr. Olympia title.

Toney Freeman

Toney has a great structure, which is why he's called 'The X-Man.' He also is fairly consistent with his condition, more so in recent outings. But at the same time, he's 6'2", and he always seems to need more mass to fill out that very large frame. At the Arnold Classic a few months ago, Freeman appeared to be very flat. With all that height and having such long limbs, being flat is something he can't afford. More mass would benefit Toney, but with his previous pec tear and the fact that he's 43, I'm not sure how much more size he can build at this stage. For his sake, I hope there are still some gains left in his physique.



Markus Ruhl

Markus looked very impressive at his comeback show in New York this past May. He has some of the freakiest pecs and delts I've ever seen, and even his quads looked bigger this time from what I remember. His conditioning looked very good from the front, not so good once he turned around. Ruhl's back is a lot like Jay's, as it appears to be watery and lacks detail even though it's not short on width or thickness. Like Cutler, I also think Markus would be wise to come in anywhere from 10-15 pounds lighter and show a more detailed package. Clearly he has enough size that he could afford to do this, and it would only make him look that much better. He has placed as high as fifth at the Mr. Olympia when his condition was at a higher level.



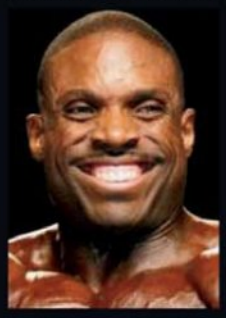
Dennis James

Dennis was also impressive in New York, where he took second to Evan Centopani. He has managed to pack an extraordinary amount of mass onto an average-size frame, and this can be a detriment when he isn't in top condition. His back, glutes, and hamstrings all need to be more detailed at the Olympia, if he wants a good placing. Like Jay and Markus, Dennis should put his focus on achieving his most shredded look ever.



Melvin Anthony

Melvin has amazing shape and structure, so much so that he sometimes places higher than other guys who aren't so gifted in those areas, even when their condition is superior. With his round muscle shapes and tiny joints, Melvin needs to be totally ripped like we've never seen him before, if he wants to stay in the elite top six this year.



Silvio Samuel

Silvio is not a huge guy, but he is well-balanced, has very pleasing muscle shapes, and is usually shredded. His condition was a bit off in New York, which is something he can't afford to do again in Las Vegas. Some people think he competes too often and that it's putting a lot of



Was the Mr. Olympia Lineup Better in My Day?

I get asked this question fairly often, and I am always reluctant to answer. Any bodybuilder, whether he competed in the 1980s, the '70s, or even earlier, usually maintains that his particular era was the best. And honestly, they all have a point. The Mr. Olympia contest represents the greatest physique competitors in the world for a given era. Comparing athletes from different eras can be a difficult task, and the resulting opinions are always fodder for debate.

With bodybuilding, you have factors such as the gene pool, training and nutrition knowledge, equipment, and supplements to consider. Still, my Mr. Olympia era was in the '90s, which was recent enough that you can rule out most of those as making a significant difference. With that lengthy preface, I will say that overall I do think the Mr. Olympia lineup had a bit more depth to it back then. Competitors like Flex Wheeler, Kevin Levrone, Shawn Ray, Nasser El Sonbaty, and Paul Dillett were all quite formidable adversaries.

One glaring difference I see between the top Mr. Olympia finalists of the '90s versus today was their superior conditioning. That probably sounds odd coming from me, as I was supposedly the man who ushered in the whole mass craze. But as I have said before, my emphasis was never on size. I was almost obsessed with displaying maximum muscle definition and detail.

The guys today seem to be more concerned with staying big and full, so they don't often go that extra mile to bring their conditioning to the highest level possible. This isn't to say that there aren't some excellent physiques on the Mr. Olympia stage today, because there are. But somehow, the total package of mass and condition that was the ideal in the years I was Mr. Olympia seems to have fallen by the wayside.



stress on his body, but I'm not sure that's the case. He's a naturally lean guy who I have never once seen more than 10 or 12 pounds out of contest condition. Still, if you want to be your best at a show of this caliber, I think it makes sense to peak less often.

Hidetada Yamagishi

Finally, here's a guy who really surprised me at the New York Pro show and who I think could have placed higher there. Hide is short in stature and doesn't yet have the most complete physique (still needs work on his back), but when he's in top condition, his physique really jumps out at you and 'pops' when he hits his poses.



Those are the men I have as the frontrunners for the 2009 Mr. Olympia. We won't know who is really going to push for the title until they take the stage in a few weeks. But regardless, there is a lot of talent in the show this year, and it's sure to be one of the most thrilling Mr. Olympias we've seen in many years.

Next Month:

You've been sending me some great questions over the past few months, and next time I will select a few to answer here. n

You can check out my new company DY Nutrition, and our products at www.dorianyatesnutrition.com

All New Columns! Starting This Month

- Anabolics Q & A
- DORIAN's Blood & Guts
- Dr. X-Walk-in-Clinic
- The Gospel According to Lee
- Shred of Evidence- Anthony Almada
- Women's Bodybuilding!
- and POWER Bodybuilding- Justin Harris



"MD JUST GOT BETTER!" —LEE PRIEST

Testosterone

By Dan Gwartney, M.D.

OLYMPIA Anabolic Stack

With all due (and considerable) respect to Arnold Schwarzenegger and the impressive Expo that bears his name, 'the title' in professional bodybuilding is the highly-coveted Mr. Olympia. In its esteemed history, true and literal giants have graced the stage, amazing judges and the global audience with size, symmetry, and definition that bring to life the mythology of ancient Greek and Roman cultures.

Two primary traits distinguish these competitors— size and definition. This month's Testosterone column will discuss the trends seen in anabolic drug use among the current cadre of professional competitors.

It is difficult to discuss this topic, for a variety of reasons. First, this article is not by any means condoning the degree or extent of use practiced by the competitors. Second, fans and aspirants should not attempt to mimic this pattern of drug use, as it far exceeds any conceivable limit of safety. Third, the use and possession of most of these drugs is illegal or requires the assistance of a health care professional— which violates ethical



standards. Fourth, it places focus on the drug use as the primary means of these men achieving their individual physiques— ignoring the years of dedicated training and disciplined diet that form the true foundation of their success. Fifth, it ignores the genetic potential and gifts that differentiate those who reach the pinnacle of their sport from the common masses. Sixth, a great number of these drugs require care in use and monitoring, as some can result in harm— even death.

Learning the trade secrets of the top competitors means following a convoluted path. A person is as likely to discover the actual cycles of the top professionals as they are to get the recipe for Coca-Cola, or Colonel Sanders' 'seven herbs and spices' that make Kentucky Fried Chicken 'finger lickin' good.'

As in any competitive field, information that one believes gives him an edge is closely held. There are certain 'foundation' drugs used for promoting muscular hypertrophy that are fairly universal. It should surprise no one that most professional bodybuilders are 'on cycle' for a great majority of the calendar year. Some bodybuilders remain on a variety of anabolics all year, merely 'bridging' on relatively mild cycles between long-duration, intense cycles. It is unclear when this trend of 'always on' developed, but it appears to have begun during the mid- to late-1980s.

One major difference that has occurred in the last two decades is the ability to suppress estrogen via aromatase inhibitors. Previously, bodybuilders were dependent on Nolvadex, a mixed agonist/antagonist that did not lower estrogen concentration— rather, it competed at the receptor level.[1] The need to minimize estrogen levels prior to a contest forced competitors to choose non-aromatizing anabolic steroids (AAS), which often do not provide the same degree of mass building/retention.

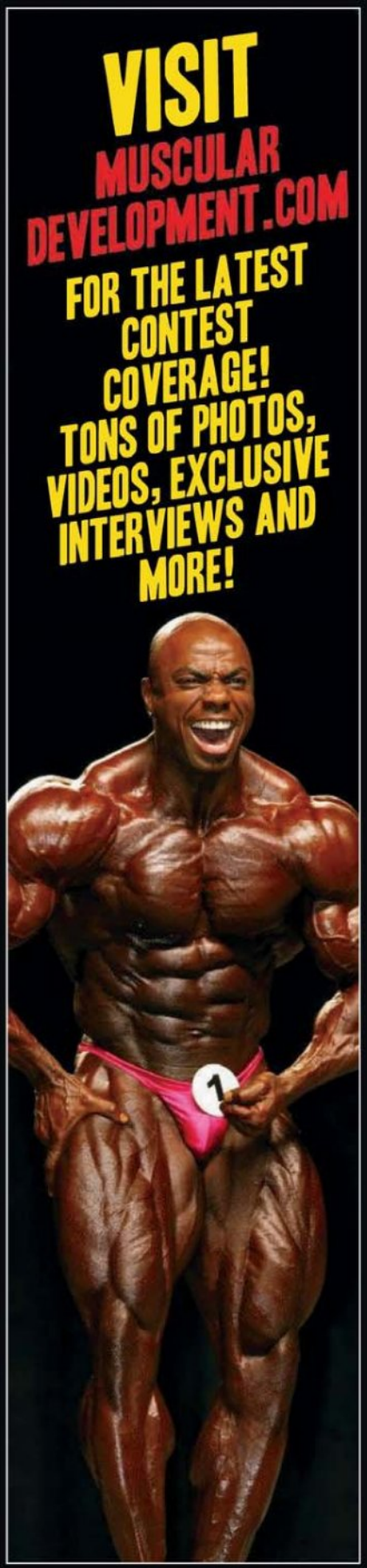
With the advent of aromatase inhibitors (i.e., Arimidex, Femara) developed to treat estrogen-sensitive breast cancer in women, bodybuilders were again able to rely on the reliable, affordable mainstay— testosterone.[2,3] This does not mean that non-aromatizable AAS are not stacked with testosterone in the cycle, just that they have less of a role. Surprising to some, Nolvadex continues to be used by many professionals, perhaps out of concern that some benefit would be lost by using aromatase inhibitors exclusively. A clinical comparison of Nolvadex to Arimidex in preventing or reducing gynecomastia demonstrated a clear advantage in using Nolvadex.[4]

Another class of adjunct drug that has allowed for a greater concentration of AAS to be used is 5alpha-reductase inhibitors. These drugs (finasteride and dutasteride) reduce the effect of AAS on hair loss and prostate enlargement primarily.[5] As bodybuilders stack (combine) a variety of steroids, many already being reduced at the 5-carbon position, the use of 5alpha-reductase inhibitors reduced the added androgenic effect of many steroids that might otherwise be converted into more androgenic forms by the 5alpha-reductase enzyme. Unfortunately, both aromatase inhibitors and 5alpha-reductase have side effects as well (i.e., depression, gynecomastia), so there is a trade-off involving underappreciated risks.[6,7]

Growth Hormone, IGF-1 and 'Seven Herbs and Spices'

Muscle growth is not promoted solely by AAS-related mechanisms. Growth hormone (GH) and the related secondary messenger IGF-1 promote general anabolism (tissue growth); this general hypertrophy does not result in strength gains, and likely affects non-contractile protein and water content.[8,9] Though most recreational users do not use GH, and few outside of competitive bodybuilding use IGF-1, it is a familiar class of drugs due to the pronounced effect the drugs have had in changing the look of the professional athlete. Swollen belly from organ growth, enlarged head, elongated hands and feet, generalized edema— these features became prominent in elite bodybuilders during the late 1980s and 1990s.

Unfortunately, early users took incredibly-massive dosages of GH needed to generate an anabolic response— which resulted in the aforementioned dysmorphic features.



IGF-1 can induce several of the same changes, and carries the added risk of lowering blood sugar dramatically, in high dosages.[9] Thankfully, the use of GH and IGF-1 has moderated from the peak use of the 1990s, but professional bodybuilders continue to use significant dosages to maximize muscle growth and definition. GH will be further discussed in this month's 'Fat Attack' column.

The anabolic properties of GH are magnified when used alongside the potent anti-catabolic hormone, insulin. Insulin is a drug/hormone used to treat severe forms of diabetes mellitus. Though it is best known as a storage hormone, increasing glycogen stores in muscle and fat stores in adipocytes, insulin also plays a significant role in halting the breakdown of contractile protein in skeletal muscle.[9,10] More than one professional bodybuilder has made a name for himself as an 'insulin guru.' In order to correctly time the anti-catabolic effect with training and food intake, fast-acting insulin is used— which can lead to dangerous, even deadly, drops in blood sugar.

Most stimulant-type drugs aid in fat loss and are actually catabolic (muscle wasting). Clenbuterol is a relatively specific beta2-agonist that has an undeserved reputation of being an anabolic stimulant. Much of this confusion results from animal studies using much higher concentrations of the drug than humans can tolerate, without the adjunct of a beta1-antagonist to prevent a dangerous/deadly heart rhythm.[11,12] Clenbuterol will also be discussed in 'Fat Attack.'

The 'seven herbs and spices' of bodybuilding enter into the research in the chemical/biologic world. The actual sources, materials, and cycles of such products are closely guarded. In the same manner that designer drugs (norbolethone, THG, etc.) were introduced to elite Olympic and professional athletes to escape detection, other sources— including private labs, employees of corporate research supply houses, pharmacy-compounding labs, pharmaceutical research and development departments, university science department students or faculty— shuttle a diverse collection of chemicals to the professional.

These drugs are provided based on the sketchy safety and efficacy data. This places the users at substantial risk of experiencing unanticipated, *unanticipatable*, side effects. Even controlled, regulated, and approved clinical trials of pharmaceutical biologics intended for human use have resulted in unintended death. Unfortunately, in the world of competitive bodybuilding and other sports, the financial reward and recognition is considered justification for the extreme risk involved.

A person is as likely to discover the actual cycles of the top professionals as they are to get the recipe for Coca-Cola, or Colonel Sanders' 'seven herbs and spices' that make Kentucky Fried Chicken 'finger lickin' good.'

Many of these 'cutting-edge' drugs come and go, as they often fail to meet expectations or result in intolerable side effects (headaches, tremors, weakness, fatigue, etc). Examples of the research chemicals that have been used by bodybuilders include a variety of classes. Veterinary anabolics were among the first drugs used, including equine (horse) and bovine (cattle) AAS. Once upon a time, boldenone (Equipoise) and trenbolone (Finaject) were thought to be exotic drugs; now they are standards in the bodybuilding pharmacopeia.

'Cutting edge' has progressed with the rapidity of scientific advancement. There are a number of androgen-based drugs that have been synthesized. Some are AAS developed decades ago that never reached the market, such as the 'designer drug' norbolethone; others are novel drugs, some are based on base steroids other than testosterone (e.g., THG).[13] The possibilities in this area are extensive and it is likely that more designer steroids will be revealed, as unscrupulous athletes will continue to pursue performance-enhancement drugs that escape detection. Hopefully, pharmaceutical companies will also re-enter the field to search for steroid analogs that offer a greater benefit-to-risk ratio.

SARMS, Clenbuterol, and Mechano Growth Factor

An exciting area of research in drug development has been the field of selective androgen receptor modulators (SARM). These drugs are not based on testosterone or other steroids, rather similarly-shaped molecules that are more selective in action. They attach onto the same receptor as testosterone, but are designed to affect one tissue type preferentially, such as muscle or bone, while minimizing any stimulatory effect on sites associated with adverse effects (i.e., prostate, hair).[14]

There is very little buzz about SARM among elite bodybuilders, and as they use the same receptor pathway as AAS, it is unlikely they would offer any additional anabolic benefit. The possibility of substituting SARM for AAS— reducing the severity or frequency of adverse effects to the prostate, hair, skin, or mental state— offers some potential appeal.

GH secretagogues have not entered mainstream medicine. There are certain drugs available that increase GH production and release, but the anabolic/lipolytic effect of these drugs is limited.[15,16] While they may be more appropriate for therapeutic use in adults experiencing reduced GH/IGF-1 levels, most bodybuilders prefer the reliability of GH. As GH use can down-regulate natural GH production by stimulating somatostatin, some bodybuilders may wish to use one or more secretagogue to maintain pituitary function.[17]

Clenbuterol has been in use for decades and pharmaceutical companies have continued to attempt to improve on the selectivity of the drug. The limiting factor in clenbuterol use is the effect it has on heart rate. Before reaching the anabolic concentration necessary to promote muscle growth, humans would suffer debilitating or fatal heart rhythm disorders. This is why clinical studies that have shown

benefits with clenbuterol require the concomitant use of a beta1-blocker.[12] These more selective drugs, formoterol being the most well-researched, may or may not be more effective than clenbuterol. Formoterol appears to be more promising than clenbuterol, but caution needs to be exercised. A related drug, fenoterol, was pulled from the market due to cardiac deaths in asthmatics using the drug for symptomatic relief.[18]

The real edge in bodybuilding seems to be in the area of biologics. Growth factors, prostaglandins, interleukin messenger molecules, and myostatin inhibitors have all been rumored to have 'found their way' into the repertoire of well-connected bodybuilders. Reports have been sporadic and indicate that most of these drugs fail to deliver, or are accompanied by side effects that impair training or health. Even bodybuilders are aware of risk, though they are certainly willing to push the envelope.

Several growth factors have made their way into the hands of bodybuilders. The current 'in vogue' growth factor is MGF, or mechano growth factor.[19] This protein hormone is produced by skeletal muscle placed under tensile strain, such as strain that occurs with exercise. MGF is essentially the muscle's form of IGF-1 produced in response to strain, injury, or GH.

Most IGF-1 is produced by the liver, which accounts for approximately two-thirds of circulating IGF-1. The amino acid sequence of the IGF-1 produced in the muscle is slightly different, and likely creates a slightly different tissue response profile. Some bodybuilders inject MGF under the skin; others inject it directly into target muscles— some injecting into the muscle directly after a workout. Anecdotal reports suggest that a moderate dose injected under the skin, twice weekly, offers the best return. Advocates suggest it offers the best of GH's anabolic effects, with less associated water retention.

In the muscle, much of the stimulus for growth is generated by actions taking place in the membrane of the cell. Stretching the membrane, or activation by certain hormones, causes enzymes to convert fatty acids in the membranes into messenger molecules. In the skeletal muscle, two are of particular interest— PGE2 and PGF2a.

PGE2 is a prostaglandin that is involved with muscle protein breakdown, but has a net anabolic effect by increasing the proliferation and incorporation of satellite cells into functional muscle fibers.[20] PGF2a has direct anabolic effects in muscle tissue, increasing muscle protein synthesis 35 percent in animal studies.[21] One downside to the prostaglandins is that they are locally acting, requiring the user to inject the drug directly into the target site (biceps, quads, etc.). Self-experimenting bodybuilders believe that the addition of IGF-1 (or MGF) and PGF2a allows for nearly continuous growth, when used with AAS and obviously, resistance training.

The trend in underground anabolics has been toward locally-acting messengers, as demonstrated by interleukin-15 (IL-15). This drug received interest after a study was published showing muscle hypertrophy doubled in the presence of IL-15, and the effect was further amplified when combined with IGF-1.[22] Some have raved about their experiences with IL-15, while others have experienced no benefit. It is possible that this drug is only effective when injected into the target tissue, and that subcutaneous (under the skin) injections fail to provide an anabolic effect.

Myostatin Blockers, Gene Doping, and Frankenstein Cocktails

It is interesting that 'whispers' of these drugs are heard for several years before verifiable reports of use become available. It is likely that well-connected bodybuilders have access to the true 'cutting edge' substances, and once their trainers/gurus find success with one, he makes a name for him/herself by providing his/her trademark research chemical to other (high-paying) clients.

The media has amazed the public with stories of toddlers with remarkable muscular development due to a genetic deficiency of myostatin



inhibitor.[23] Myostatin is a protein hormone, produced by skeletal muscle that limits growth. Why would the body do this? Because unnecessary muscle is metabolically expensive, requiring greater calorie intake and cardiovascular support— while generating excess heat. Cattle, greyhounds, and other animals have shown tremendous muscular growth when deficient in or treated with myostatin inhibitors.[24] Of course, it was only a matter of moments before bodybuilders began to pursue these drugs.

Reports about myostatin inhibitors have been disappointing. Many research-grade myostatin inhibitors may not be specific to skeletal muscle and might affect the heart muscle as well. That, plus the additional cardiovascular burden, tends to create chronic fatigue in those experimenting with these drugs.

Endogenous (created by the body) myostatin inhibitors are representative of an area that greatly concerns sports-doping agencies— gene doping.[25,26] Animal models have been transfected with human genes, allowing them to overproduce a number of hormones, enzymes, etc. It is inconceivable that someone, somewhere, has not self-experimented with the technology. Whereas bodybuilders may not have access yet (though likely do) to gene-transfection, imagine the temptation to a diabetic researcher of a therapy that can restore insulin production, or the ability to treat a spouse/family member with Parkinson's disease.

There remain a number of compounds being 'whispered' about, ones that are little more than urban legend at this point, but this brief exposé gives you an idea of the extremes to which drug (and biologic) use has reached in the pursuit of neverending muscle growth.[27-29] There may be no end to the risks certain individuals will subject themselves to, well beyond the ethics of science.

Sadly, competitors believe that they will give up an insurmountable advantage if they do not experiment with these 'Frankenstein' cocktails. Looking at the evolution of bodybuilding physiques, that may be, unfortunately, true. ■

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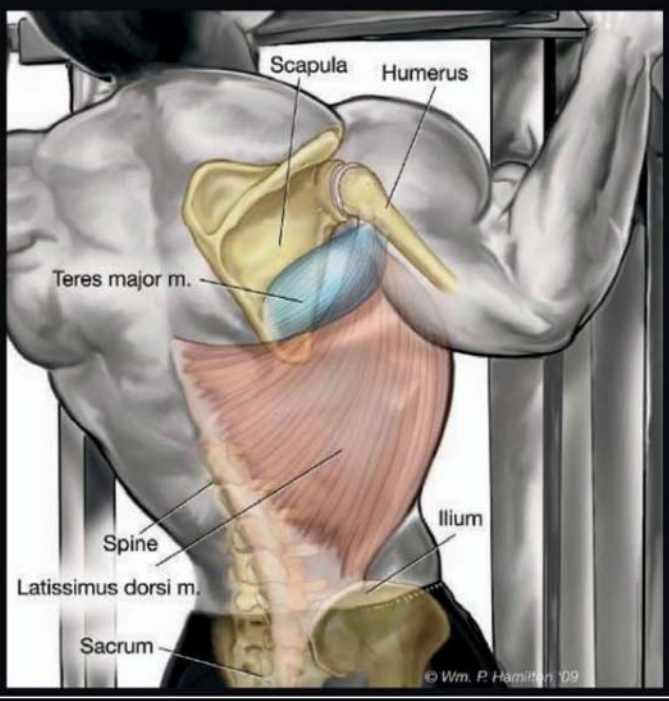
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Muscleform & function

By Stephen E. Alway, Ph.D., FACSM, Illustrations by William P. Hamilton, CMI

Assisted Pull-ups for A Wider Back

Pull-ups are not on most bodybuilders' lists for favorite back-building exercises. Usually this stems from bad experiences with chin-ups in school classes before they started serious bodybuilding. However, when they are performed correctly, pull-ups can be an excellent upper back exercise. Nevertheless, as you gain body mass, it becomes more difficult to do chins/pull-ups and therefore to load your back properly. This is when modern technology can come to the rescue. Assisted pull-ups on a machine will help to counterbalance your body mass just enough for you to pound out enough repetitions to gorge your upper back muscles with growth-producing blood. There is nothing like a fully-pumped upper back, which forces your lats to spread like wings every time your arms move upward on your next chin.



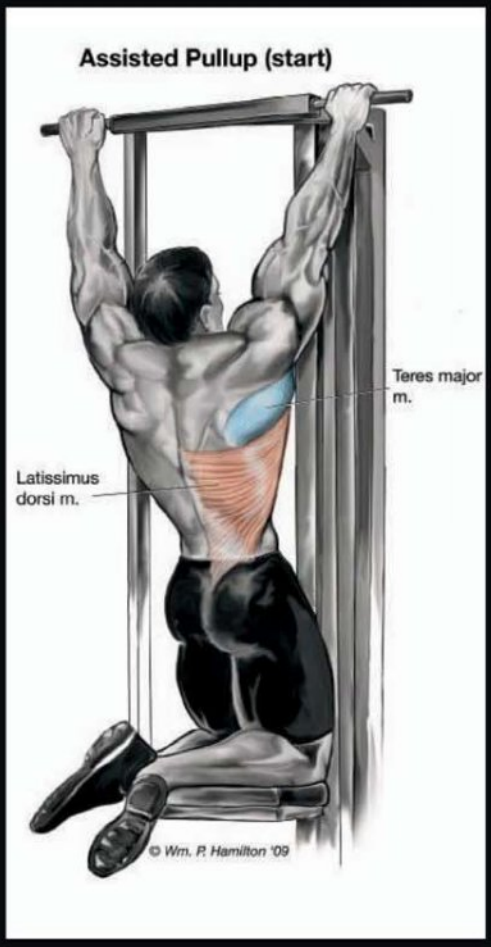
Muscles Activated by Pull-ups

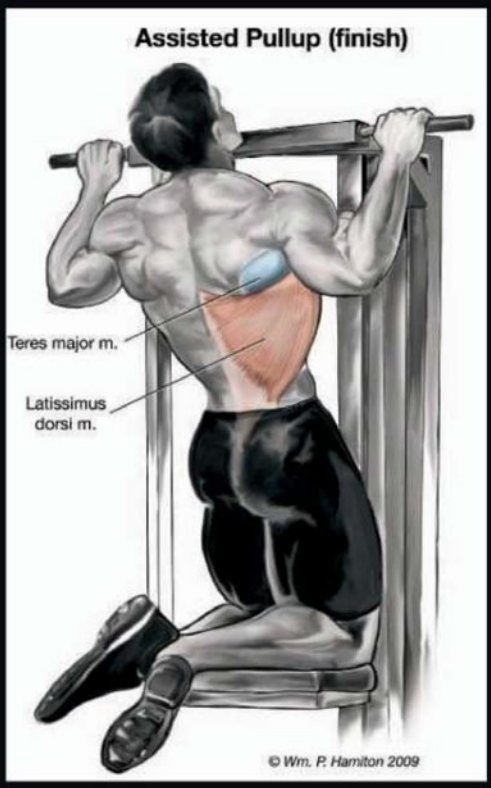
Although the shoulders, elbow flexors and even the chest are activated to some degree in pull-ups, focused activation occurs in the upper and middle back muscles.

The ***latissimus dorsi*** ('lats' to most people) is the largest of the active muscle groups. Most of this muscle is located in the middle of the back and not the upper back. The fibers of the latissimus dorsi muscle extend from a lower (inferior) position on the thoracic vertebrae, the iliac crest of the hip, to converge much like a fan on the upper (superior) portion of the humerus bone of the upper arm near the shoulder. The muscle fibers have several different angles of pull, depending on where their origin is located.

The primary function of all of the fibers acting together is to extend the humerus (pull the upper arm backward), adduct the humerus (bring the arm toward the center of the body), and rotate the shoulder inward (medial rotation). The lower part of the latissimus dorsi muscle has a more direct line of pull when the shoulder is flexed and the arm is raised to a position that is about 30 degrees above a line that is parallel to the floor. The middle fibers of the muscle have a more direct pull with the hands and arms working at mid-chest level. The upper fibers are best activated with the shoulders a little above shoulder height. Working with the arms directly over the head tends to activate the middle and lower parts of the muscle more effectively. Pull-ups will activate all areas of the latissimus.

Most of the width of the upper back immediately under the arm in the region of the axilla (armpit) is generated by the ***teres major muscle,*** not the latissimus muscle. The teres muscle begins on the inferior angle of the scapula (shoulder blade), but it attaches high into the same region of the humerus bone of the arm as the latissimus dorsi. Similar to the latissimus dorsi, the teres





major muscle adducts and medially rotates the humerus. Because it begins on the scapula, it is more completely activated with the arms at mid-chest level, or in work directly overhead.

Proper Exercise Form for Pull-ups

The mechanics and muscle activation patterns in pull-ups are very similar to lat bar pulldowns.

1. Adjust the counter weight stack on the assisted pull-up machine so that it will be as small as possible, but something that you can still crank out 10 good reps.

2. Kneel on the platform and grip the bar with the hands in a pronated position and directly below the shoulders. A greater activation of the teres major can be obtained by starting with a grip that is wider than shoulder-width. Although the wider grip does not help the latissimus dorsi very much, it does provide a more favorable action of pull and stretch than a closer grip for the teres major (i.e., widening the upper back).

3. Pull yourself up until the grip bar is at the same level as the upper part of the chest, just below the chin; don't stop just because your chin has reached the level of the bar. Do this quickly (i.e., in 2 seconds). You should try to arch the upper back and get your body as high as possible to ensure a complete contraction of the upper and intermediate back muscles, in addition to the teres major and latissimus dorsi muscles. Exhale as you come up.

4. Slowly (3-4 seconds) lower yourself until your upper back is completely stretched at the bottom position. Inhale as you are lowering your body.

5. Allow a 2-second stretch at the bottom before starting upward for the next repetition. This will result in lengthening of the latissimus and teres major muscles before the contraction, and therefore increase activation of these muscles throughout the next part of the movement.

The use of wrist straps is recommended for those who have weak forearm strength (weak grip strength), and/or those bodybuilders who find that their biceps and other arm flexors are fatiguing before their back. The wide grip will certainly reduce the range of motion for the latissimus dorsi, but it places the teres major in a better line of pull to more fully activate this muscle. Conversely, the lower fibers of the latissimus dorsi muscle should be in a better angle for activation if the grip is narrow. Thus, if one were to design the ideal pull-up, it would begin with a wide grip (at the bottom stretched position), and finish with a narrow grip. Of course, this type of constant change in the handgrip position is not possible on a chin bar yet.

Pull-ups are a nice adjunct to your back training day, because they will help to strengthen the back and maximize your upper and middle back width. Of course, the 'downside' is that the extra back width that you will obtain by doing your pull-ups places you at a greater risk for being caught away by high-velocity gusts of wind. On the other hand, this might just allow you to soar above your bodybuilding competition. ■

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NO JUICE Bodybuilding

MUSCLE SHAPING: Myth or Possibility? (Part II)

By Eric Broser

As a trainer/coach, I think one of the most common queries I receive in regard to 'muscle shaping' is "How can I get a better peak on my biceps?" While it is true that individual genetics dictate whether people naturally develop longer, more football-shaped biceps (think **Sergio Oliva**), or shorter, more mountain-like biceps (think **Darrem Charles**), this does not mean that you cannot use 'targeted training' to create the illusion of having a better biceps peak if your parents did not pass along the proper DNA. The key lies in stimulating greater development in a little-talked-about muscle that sits underneath the biceps known as the *brachialis*. In a highly-defined bodybuilder, the brachialis appears as a thick knot of muscle that literally pops out the side of the upper arm when it is flexed and viewed from the rear. The cool thing about the brachialis is that as it grows larger and thicker, it will actually 'push' the biceps up higher, providing the look of a greater peak!

The problem with effectively stimulating the brachialis is that with most standard curling movements, the biceps acts as the main flexor of the upper arm, leaving the 'brachs' with little work to do… and *you* with flatter biceps! Thus, in order to achieve the 'lofty' goal of *higher bi's,* you must utilize specific movements that put the biceps in a *mechanically weak* position, so the brachialis is forced to get into the game. And this can only be accomplished through the use of proper angles and hand/wrist positioning.

Below is a list of exercises that I have found to be most effective as creating the illusion of increased biceps peak, while at the same time providing a more 'complete' look to the upper arm.

Hammer Curls

Hold a pair of dumbbells at your sides with your palms facing inward toward your thighs. Curl the dumbbells together, or in an alternate fashion, but keep your palms facing inward throughout the set… as if wielding a *hammer.* Make sure to keep your elbows locked in place, not allowing them to rise up or outward while you curl. At the peak contraction point, squeeze extra-hard before slowly lowering the dumbbells back to arms' length. Hammer curls can be performed standing or seated (on a regular or incline bench), on a cable with rope attachment, concentration curl style, or even off a preacher bench.

Reverse Curls

These are performed just like regular barbell curls with the only exception being that the palms are facing downward. This position forces both the brachialis and brachioradialis of the forearm to work very intensely during this movement. Make sure you keep your elbows locked into your sides and wrists straight throughout the set. This is an exercise that should be performed very strictly, thus the need to keep the weight moderate and the reps in the 8-15 range. If you find that doing reverse curls with a straight bar is uncomfortable, try using an EZ-curl bar instead. Reverse curls can also be done on a cable machine, and on a preacher bench as well for an even stricter, more isolated movement.

90-Degree Preacher Curls

To perform this movement you will be curling off of the vertical, not angled, side of a preacher bench. Some gyms actually have specialized pieces of equipment specifically for this exercise called "Spider Benches." To begin, load up a barbell with only about 60-70 percent of your normal preacher curl weight, as the 90° angle makes this a far stricter and more difficult movement. Position yourself over the bench in such a manner that your armpits are snugly pressed into the top. Grab the weight and allow your arms to hang straight down.

As you start to curl, make sure that your shoulders and elbows remain locked in position, so that the brachialis is

forced to work as hard as possible to flex the arm. Cheating on this exercise serves you no purpose. At the top of the movement, contract the biceps tightly and then slowly lower the bar back to the starting position. Variations of this exercise include using dumbbells, an EZ-curl bar, or even a cable machine.

Overhead Cable Curls

This unique exercise is my personal favorite for a precision assault on the brachialis. Begin by placing a flat bench in front of a weight stack on one side of a cable crossover machine. Make sure that the bench is at least a foot or so away from the stack, so as to avoid smashing your head. Attach a short straight bar to the upper pulley, lie down, and plant your feet firmly on the floor. Have someone hand you the bar if possible, as trying to grab it yourself is a bit awkward on this exercise. Start with your arms completely straight and then begin curling the bar both down *and* back, so that at the full contraction point, the bar is actually *behind your head.*

As you curl, you will need to draw your elbows back slightly and tip your head forward just a bit, in order to achieve this exaggerated range of motion. At the bottom, hold the squeeze for a second or two and then return the bar under control to the starting position. As a variation, this exercise can also be performed seated, facing an upper cable pulley. In this case, you would hold your arms straight overhead, and again curl the bar down *and* back to full contraction.

So there you have it… my prescription for *"sneaking a peak"* onto your biceps!

And Speaking of Peaking…

Last month, I answered a question from a reader regarding peaking for a competition in the final week. It led me to discuss a new method I have been working with called the 'carb/de-carb' technique (real fancy name, huh?), which has proven to be extremely effective, especially for those who have a tendency to 'spill over.' The truth of the matter is that once you are in a carb-depleted state, it is at this point that your body is most 'responsive' to ingested carbohydrates (similar to the post-training 'window'). This basically means that your early carb-up meals tend to be partitioned towards your muscles cells/liver and nowhere else.

However, as you continue to eat carbs, it becomes more and more likely that you will begin to spill over as your muscles get closer to being filled and you become less responsive to insulin. This is why the idea of eating more and more carbohydrates each day as you approach a show often ends up backfiring. To illustrate what I am talking about here, let me present to you a plan I used recently with an Australian figure competitor weighing about 125 pounds. I should mention that in Australia the judges tend to look for extreme hardness and dryness, even in their figure girls, so she could not afford to hold water… but at the same time needed to be adequately full and round.

At 10 days out, her normal diet consisted of about 95 grams of carbohydrates on training days and 40 grams on off (cardio only days). After working with her over a couple of years, I would rate her as moderately good at handling carbs in general. Here is how the last eight days looked:

DAYS OUT	CARB GRAMS	WATER	SODIUM	TRAINING
8 (FRI)	20	NORMAL	NORMAL	CARDIO/INTENSE
7 (SAT)	45	NORMAL	NORMAL	WEIGHTS/INTENSE
6 (SUN)	45	NORMAL	NORMAL	WEIGHTS/INTENSE
5 (MON)	20	NORMAL	NORMAL	CARDIO/INTENSE
4 (TUES)	155	NORMAL	NORMAL	WEIGHTS/LIGHT
3 (WED)	115	NORMAL	CUT BY 1/3	WEIGHTS/LIGHT
2 (THURS)	75	CUT BY 1/3	CUT BY 2/3	CARDIO/LIGHT
1 (FRI)	35	CUT BY 2/3	NONE	NONE
SHOW DAY (SAT)	0 (PROTEIN/FATS ONLY)	SIPS	NONE	NONE

The result was profound with this plan, as it left her totally dry with paper-thin skin. Her definition was astonishing and her muscles were full and hard. I have had similar results with my male bodybuilding clients as well (both natural and enhanced). Obviously, this protocol needs to be tweaked, specific to each individual, but at least it gives you a basic outline to work with should you choose to try it.

See you guys on the *hardest* of the hardcore forums on www.musculardevelopment.com. Until next month— train hard, safe and smart!

A CALORIE IS A CALORIE…RIGHT? AN EXAMINATION OF CHICKEN BREAST…AND TWINKIES?

By Layne Norton, BS Biochemistry, Ph.D. Candidate Nutritional Science

"To say that obesity is caused by merely consuming too many calories is like saying that the only cause of the American Revolution was the Boston Tea Party." ~Adelle Davis



This quote gets to the core of a basic question that is the topic of much discussion in bodybuilding circles. What's more important: what you eat or how much you eat? A study conducted by the Institute for Nutrition and Cancer Research (INCR) discovered that 78 percent of adults agreed with the statement, "The kind of foods you eat is more important than the quantity of food you eat," in regard to weight management. Very good arguments can certainly be made for and against the statement. It is true that your overall caloric balance during a given day will determine whether or

not your weight changes. On the other hand, food choices can influence that caloric balance, by influencing metabolic rate, the thermic effect of food (TEF), and satiety. In order for one to lose weight, and hence, body fat, one's caloric expenditure must exceed their caloric intake and this requires energy intake control, and thus the quantity of food must be controlled.[1]

It is pertinent to state that one should eat healthy foods when on a weight-loss diet. Fruits, vegetables, low-fat meats, and the like are good sources of vitamins, minerals, and fiber (in the case of fruits and vegetables) and these can certainly impact one's health. However, one cannot simply eat as many 'good' foods as they like with reckless abandon and expect not to gain weight. It is certainly easier to achieve a caloric surplus eating Twinkies all day than it is to achieve that same surplus though fruits, vegetables, and lean meats; however, if the person eating only Twinkies makes a conscious effort to limit their Twinkie intake to a caloric level that is less than the amount of calories they expend per day, they will lose fat; whereas a person who eats an unlimited amount of 'good' foods will still gain weight if they consume more calories than they expend. Don't get me wrong— eating only Twinkies is not a good strategy for losing fat— but it is an extreme example to support my points.

There are plenty of meathead gurus out there who would have you believe that consuming chicken, rice, and broccoli cannot make you fat, no matter how much you eat of it. They will most likely try to argue that the specific foods you eat are more important than the quantity that you eat will use the argument that "a calorie is not a calorie" to support their stance. In other words, they believe that certain foods may provide an advantage over other foods.

There certainly is ample evidence to support this stance. For example, diets higher in protein are less 'energy efficient' as the conversion of alanine to glucose during gluconeogenesis (production of glucose from amino acids and other substrates) requires 6 ATP molecules and the conversion of pyruvate to glucose also consumes 6 ATP molecules.[2-3] Furthermore, 4 molecules of ATP are required to dispose of the nitrogen as urea.[3]

Now, before you throw up your hands and say "What the hell does all that mean?," realize that it's only a scientifically correct way of saying that turning protein into energy requires more energy input by your body, compared to carbs or fats. Maintaining the protein turnover is also energetically very costly.[4] In fact, the thermic effects of nutrients are approximately 2-3 percent for lipids, 6-8 percent for carbohydrates, and 25-30 percent for protein[5]! This increased thermic effect of food seems to cause increased weight loss in high-protein diets compared to diets equal in calories but higher in carbohydrates.[6] The fiber content of a diet is also another issue to consider. Dietary fiber contains far less metabolizable energy than starchy carbohydrates, due to incomplete absorption of fiber, and the amount of energy extracted from fiber is less than that of other carbohydrates.[7]

This information has led many meatheads to deduct proudly that by consuming a high-protein/low-carbohydrate/increased fiber diet, you need not concern oneself with calorie intake, because there is a far smaller net energy gain when consuming such a diet, as compared to a typical higher carbohydrate diet. Although the net energy gain is much smaller on a high-protein/low-carbohydrate/increased fiber diet, the fact remains that it is still quite possible one can consume more calories than they expend, if they fail to control the quantity of food that they take in.

Controlling food intake and self-monitoring are crucial in any weight-loss or weight-maintenance regimen. In fact, Hill et al., found that the majority of people who successfully lost fat and maintained it for at least one year practiced some form of restraint, including restricting certain foods, portion sizes, and counting calories.[8] So while it may require a greater quantity of food on a high-protein/low-carbohydrate diet to exceed one's caloric expenditure, it can still be done; therefore the quantity of food must be controlled.

While controlling the quantity of food one eats may be more important than the types of foods one eats in regard to weight maintenance/loss, it is important to note that the types of foods that one eats will impact the quantity of foods that one will consume as well. Diets high in protein and high fiber have both shown to reduce hunger compared to a higher carbohydrate or reduced fiber diet.[8,9] Additionally, research has demonstrated that high-protein diets have an increased thermic effect of food, allowing for greater weight loss at 'equal' calorie intakes when compared to higher carbohydrate diets.

The big take-home points are that eating 'good' foods will allow you to keep total calories higher, but eating the occasional 'bad' food won't wreck your diet, as long as it controlled within the context of total caloric intake. Therefore, the most successful strategy in achieve limiting fat gain/maximizing fat loss is to practice cognitive restraint while consuming a diet high in protein and dietary fiber. ■

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MuscleTech RESEARCH REPORT

By Team MuscleTech Research and Development

BODYBUILDING Q&A

Q: I've been hearing a lot about Heat Shock Proteins (HSPs) from bodybuilders at my gym and from my personal trainer. I don't really understand what they are and how they're supposed to help muscle growth. Can you explain what HSPs are and why they're important?

—Heat Shocked, Arlington, TX

A: Great question, Heat Shocked— it's very common for people to not fully understand the power of Heat Shock Proteins because they are so new to the bodybuilding community. For starters, HSPs are biological regulators. This means they have a specific role in the body and can be upregulated at certain times. For example, HSPs are increased throughout the body during periods of stress, specifically during intense training sessions. The key function of HSPs is to act as a protective 'construction crew' for muscle cells, offering cellular protection as well as maintaining cellular integrity.

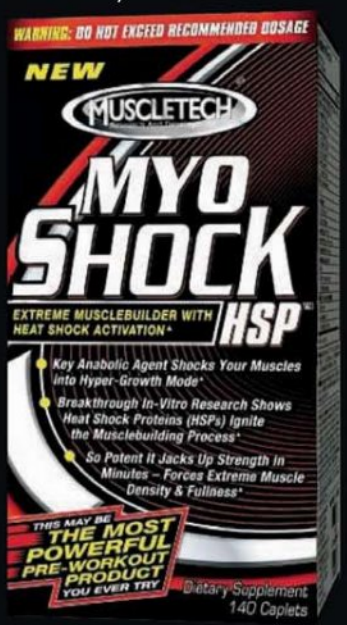
When you train, you are putting your body under immense amounts of physiological stress. This naturally activates HSPs, which then work to entwist amino acid peptides into 3-D forms so they can function to create new muscle tissue.[1] To illustrate just how cutting-edge the research on HSPs is, scientists have theorized that their effects may be useful for helping preserve muscle mass when bodies are exposed to extremely low-gravity situations— in other words, for astronauts on space missions. Researchers also concluded that HSPs have been shown to act as lifeguards against proteotoxic stresses and assist in protein formation and stabilization.[2]

As you can see, HSPs are important cell regulators that may be extremely important when it comes to packing on muscle. Look for a pre-workout supplement that has ingredients designed to increase HSP activation, to get maximum results from your training sessions. One that I always recommend is MyoShock$^{HSP™}$. Not only is it engineered to activate HSPs, but it has an added muscle-building compound and a key compound that can help to instantly increase your strength!

Q: I've been thinking of using an HSP-activating supplement for awhile now, but I'm unsure of the best time to take one of these supplements. Some are pre-workout products and others are post-workout. Can you help?

—Bad Timing, San Francisco, CA

A: This is a very interesting question because you're right, different HSP-activating products are marketed to be taken at various times around your workout. Research has shown that a certain ingredient can increase HSP activation when taken pre-workout. In other words, pre-workout could be the optimal time to take an HSP activator.



Research has shown that HSPs play an extremely crucial role in accelerated protein synthesis and activating intracellular growth signals. HSPs also help maintain homeostatic mechanisms and myocellular stability and help muscles repair.[3] Given all of the amazing capabilities of HSPs, one could conclude that the more HSPs you activate, the better. And due to their multifunctional roles in many of the body's physiological processes, activation of HSPs should occur as early as possible in relation to your training. That's why I always recommend a pre-workout HSP activator and, again, why I favor MyoShock^{HSP}. In fact, the key HSP-activating ingredient in MyoShock^{HSP} was shown in a scientific study to dramatically increase HSP response when taken pre-workout.[4] Timing of HSP activation is very important. You should always take a pre-workout supplement that activates HSPs in order to help capitalize on benefits of HSP activation. ■

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RAMBLIN' TIL 6

By Gregg Valentino





DISCLAIMER:
The following is uncensored/ unedited and in no way reflects the opinions of the staff of Muscular Development. Who the hell knows what this guy might say... he's a mental freak. This article is for entertainment purposes only.

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN....THE 2009 MR. OLYMPIA, MY CRAZY REVIEW OF IT ALL...I MUST FIRST TELL YOU THAT JUST LIKE EVERY YEAR, I FIND OUT AT ***THE VERY LAST MINUTE*** THAT THIS IS **THE OLYMPIA ISSUE**... *WHOOOPIE!!!*.....**I'M ECSTATIC!!!!...** ***NOT!!***...SO NOW THAT MEANS I GOTTA TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT **THE MR. OLYMPIA**...***I KNOW...I KNOW*** ...YOU REALLY DON'T GIVE A SHIT WHAT I THINK, BUT I GOTTA TELL YA ANYWAY, SO BEAR WITH ME, WILL YA....I NOW DEDICATE THE REST OF THIS MONTH'S COLUMN TO THE MR. OLYMPIA , PAST *&* PRESENT.... **BIG SIGH & A BIG GULP**

FIRST LET ME VENT ABOUT > MR. OLYMPIA ON **TV, *NAAHHHH*, IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN!!!...**NOT IN THIS ERA AND IN THE CONDITION **BODYBUILDING** IS IN TODAY....YO' IS IT JUST ME OR DO YOU MOMOS FEEL THE SAME WAY I DO???...**CHECK IT OUT >>>** IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY FUCKING NIGHT I TURN ON **ESPN** AND THEY ARE BROADCASTING ***"THE SUPER BOWL*** OF ***POKER"***... HEY, WHAT'S UP WITH THAT **BULLSHIT!!!!...**HOW THE HELL IS ***POKER*** A *FUCKING* **SPORT** AND WHY IS FIRST PRIZE LIKE **MILLIONS OF DOLLARS??...**EVEN ***CAR RACING***, HOW THE FUCK IS THAT SHIT A SPORT???....***YOU DON'T NEED TO BE IN SHAPE TO PLAY POKER OR RACE A CAR,*** HELL I KNOW A DUDE WITH ***NO LEGS*** WHO DRIVES A CAR...***IT'S NOT A SPORT AND YOU MOMOS KNOW IT!...***YO THE SAME THING GOES FOR **ESPN** CONSTANTLY BROADCASTING **"BILLIARDS"....** ***"THE WORLD SERIES OF DARTS" & "BOWLING"....***I'M SORRY BUT HEY, NONE OF THESE **"GAMES"** ARE A SPORT EITHER, **THEY ARE *GAMES*** LIKE THROWING ***HORSE SHOES*** OR ***LAWN DARTS***....YET ***ESPN*** GIVES ALL THAT SHIT MORE COVERAGE THAN ***BODYBUILDING***....HELL THEY JUST HAD A WOMAN ON **ESPN *NEWS*** THAT WAS **100 YEARS OLD** AND SHE WAS A ***SENIOR*** **BOWLING CHAMPION**....OH YEAH BABE, IT'S TRUE **100-YEAR-OLD *EMMA HENDRICKSON*** OF **MORRIS PLAINS *NEW JERSEY*** WAS ON **TV** FOR HER 50TH CONSECUTIVE APPREARANCE **"United States Bowling Congress Women's Championships."**...**WOW!!!**, **50 YEARS IN A ROW!!!!** ...HEY I ADMIT, **YES** THAT'S AWESOME, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP US BODYBUILDERS WHO WEREN'T EVEN BORN WHEN **EMMA** WAS ALREADY ***WINNING*** **BOWLING TOURNAMENTS**.

I'VE SAID IT BEFORE AND I'LL SAY IT AGAIN, BACK IN THE **80's** *AND* ***EARLY*** **90's** THE **MR.OLYMPIA** WAS BROADCAST EVERY YEAR ON **ESPN** AND UNTIL BODYBUILDING GOES BACK TO THE MORE **"PLEASING PHYSIQUES"** YOU WILL ***NEVER, EVER*** SEE BODYBUILDING ON **ESPN** AGAIN...THAT'S WHY I'M GLAD TO SEE THE NEW BLOOD IN OUR SPORT **EVAN CENTAPONI, *MARK ALVISI*, ERIK *"THE HOUSE"* FANKHOUSER** AND ***BRANDEN RAY*** ALL ***MD*** BOYZ WHO BRING A NEW **"FRESH LOOK"** THAT IS LONG OVERDUE IN THIS SPORT....TILL THEN WE WILL JUST HAVE TO DEAL WITH MOMOS IN ***SUNGLASSES*** *&* ***COWBOY HATS*** PLAYING **POKER,** OR **FAT DUDES** IN SUSPENDERS ***THROWING*** **DARTS** AND **WINNING *MILLIONS OF DOLLARS*** ALL WHILE BEING BROADCAST ON THE **TOP *SPORTS CHANNEL*** IN THE WORLD, **ESPN!!!...IT'S A FUCKING SHAME!!!...**OK ENOUGH SAID!!!!...**It's like that old saying >*The Rich Get Richer and the Poor keep having more Children!!!...***OH YEAH BABE*, I'M NOT SURE IF THAT STATEMENT FITS HERE, BUT IT'S DEFINITELY SO FUCKING TRUE!!!

HEY, SPEAKING OF ***BULLSHIT*** ON **TV** *&* **THE *MR. OLYMPIA*** ....YO' LET ME JUST SAY THAT I LOVE **ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER MOVIES**, THEY ARE ALL GREAT EXCEPT THERE IS ***ONE*** THAT I FUCKING **HATE** WITH A PASSION AND WHILE I'M TYPING THIS SHIT UP **MY GIRL** IS WATCHING THAT PIECE OF SHIT IN MY LIVING ROOM RIGHT NOW, IT'S ***THE MOVIE*** **"JUNIOR"** WITH **ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER** AS A ***PREGNANT MAN***...HOLY SHIT, I'LL BE GOD-DAMNED, THAT'S THE WORST FUCKING ***DUMB-ASS*** **MOVIE** THAT **ARNOLD** HAS EVER MADE!!....GEEZ IMAGINE **ARNOLD** GETTING ***PREGNANT*** AND ***GIVING BIRTH*** TO A **BABY GIRL** *(THAT LOOKS LIKE FRANCO COLUMBU....YUUUKK)*, THAT'S ***NOT*** MY IDEA OF FUNNY OR OF ENTERTAINMENT....REALLY YO', WHAT THE FUCK IS UP WITH THAT SHIT!!!!.....WHAT WAS **ARNOLD** THINKING OF WHEN HE READ **THE**

MOVIE SCRIPT, AFTER ALL, **THE MOVIE** WAS A HUGE **FLOP** ANYWAY.

HEY, I'M SORRY BUT I CAN'T WATCH ***BULLSHIT*** LIKE THAT, KEEP IN MIND THAT I'M ***NOT*** A **BIG TV WATCHER** UNLESS IT'S **SPORTS** *(YANKEES AND ALL SPORTS)*, I ALSO LOVE **GHOST HUNTERS** *(TAPS)*, **SURVIVOR MAN** *(LES STROUD)* OR **ALL *HISTORY CHANNEL*, SCIENCE CHANNEL** *&* ***NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL*** *(NAT-GEO)* ***STUFF***...I'M A HUGE **HISTORY & SCIENCE** BUFF...LISTEN, I'M NOT TRYIN TO SOUND ***CULTURED*** IT'S JUST THAT'S THE WAY I AM, I NEVER WATCHED A CURRENT **TV SITCOM** AND **I HATE ALL REALITY & GAME SHOWS**, I ***NEVER*** WATCHED *SURVIVOR, DANCING WITH THE STARS, AMERICAN IDOL,*.....YES, I LOVE TO GO TO THE MOVIES, BUT ONLY IF IT'S A **GOOD MOVIE**, I'M VERY PICKY, I HAVE ***ZERO*** **TOLERANCE** FOR ***DUMB-ASS*** SHIT LIKE ***ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER*** **GIVING BIRTH!!!!**...OH MAN JUST TYPING THAT SHIT UP IS LIKE **SCRATCHING MY *FINGER NAILS*** ON A ***CHALKBOARD***...HEY, MY FUCKING GIRLFRIEND BETTER NOT DARE ASK ME TO GET PREGNANT, IT'S BAD ENOUGH SHE TAKES OUT HER ***STRAP ON*** AND**....OH NEVER MIND!!!..**HERE IS THE ***ARNOLD*** WE ALL **LOVE** *AND* **ADMIRE > "Every set that I did in the gym, every repetition I did on chin-ups, on squats with 500 pounds, I never said to myself, 'Oh my God another rep,', instead I said, 'Yes! Another rep, another rep!'"....** ***ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER***...YO', THAT'S **MY *ARNOLD,*** NOT **NO *PREGNANT MAN!!!***... ***MERCEDES*** HAS TO TURN THAT SHIT OFF RIGHT NOW, IT'S AFFECTING ME WRITING MY COLUMN...***Damn it, I'm a man...It's my God-given right to watch Sports and Smut!!!***

MY EXPERT ADVICE TO OLYMPIA PROs > "Pre-Contest training is just like bad-back-pain...You forget how horrible it is until *'It's That Time Again'"*....GV

NOW I WANNA GIVE MY ***RAMBLIN FREAK*** **READERS** WHO ARE ALSO **MR. OLYMPIA *COMPETITORS*** SOME VERY VALUABLE CONTEST ADVICE...YOU FANS CAN READ THIS BUT IT'S DIRECTED AT HELPING **THE OLYMPIA COMPETITORS** FOR ***THIS YEAR***...By now I'm sure you all have started your intense training!....So I don't need to remind you that Twinkies, Ding Dongs and pizza are no longer allowed in your diet, they will be consumed by us fat bastards only!.... YES, once again its time to cut your carbs and eat lots of protein, that means lots of meat, just follow my eating creed for success > ***"I want some form of dead animal on my dinner table and I want that animal to be succulent & juicy!!!"...Red Meat RULES!!!.*** And please stop listening to the gurus, they all look like shit themselves, they will only fuck up your thinking *&* common sense *(hey, why is that if they know so much yet look like shit...HHHHMMM)*...And just know that ***red meat is not bad for you...fuzzy green meat is bad for you, not red Meat !!!!!...***Always remember that **Valentino** *(that's me)* taught you that!!...Oh yes, one more thing, I'm sorry to say **"Women weaken legs,"** so ***sex before the big day is out!*** *(unless of course you can keep it secret from your girlfriend/wife....in that case, go for it !!!)*....And finally, a word from the wise *(the wise— that's me, you pinheads):* If you're having trouble sleeping and you are feeling kinda bloated *&* holding water > ***for God's sake NEVER, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night!!!....Ya heard!!!!...Oh Hell NO!!!....***And remember, ***"Have fun and enjoy the moment but it's only a great show if you win, because if you lose it's just a fucking waste of time!!!."***

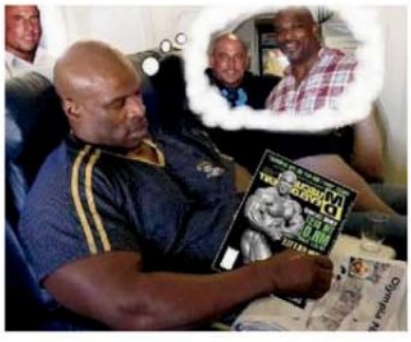
I HOPE ***MY ADVICE*** HAS BEEN HELPFUL...YA SEE I'M NOT A ***BAD GUY***, I JUST LOVE TO HELP PEOPLE OUT, IT'S MY NATURE!!! *wink*...NOW AS FOR ***MY CHOICE*** FOR WHO IS GONNA ***WIN*** THIS YEAR'S **BIG SHOW** *(THE MR.OLYMPIA, YA FRIGGIN MEATBALL)*, I'LL TELL YOU WHO I THINK IS GONNA WIN *AFTER* THE SHOW!!!...***AAHHH*** **JUST KINDING**, *YO', RELAX*....DON'T GET ALL WORKED UP, ***DO YOU REALLY CARE WHAT I THINK???....***WELL I KNOW **STEVE BLECHMAN** WANTS ME TO GIVE YOU MY OPINION SO HERE IT GOES >> MY PICK FOR ***THE 2009 OLYMPIA*** IS **ROBBIE DURAND**....****SIKE*!!!!*, LEMME STOP!!!....**ACTUALLY IN ALL SERIOUSNESS, **ROBBIE DURAND** HAS BEEN ***MD's*** **MR. OLYMPIA** SINCE HE TOOK OVER AS **2nd IN COMMAND** TO **STEVE BLECHMAN** ONLY...MY BOY **ROBBIE** HAS DONE AN ***INCREDIBLE JOB*** FOR ***MD*** CONSIDERING HE WAS JUST **"THROWN INTO THE FIRE"** *OVERNIGHT* BACK IN THE BEGINNING OF **2009** AND SINCE THEN HE HAS REALLY PROVEN TO BE OUR ***MD*-MR.OLYMPIA** .

OK...ENOUGH GREASING THE BOSSES ASSES, MY PICK TO BE ***BODYBUILDINGS*** **2009 MR.OLYMPIA** IS ***MY BOY*** **VICTOR MARTINEZ**, OF COURSE THAT IS IF THE JUDGING IS **FAIR**, IN THAT CASE IT'S **GAME OVER!!!!.. "OOOPS I almost forgot, Steve Blechman might get mad at me, I'm not allowed to comment on the lousy past judging of the Olympia." BUT HEY, IT'S MY OPINION!!....**OF COURSE **JAY & DEXTER** ARE ***GREAT BODYBUILDERS*** AND ***GREAT CHAMPIONS***, BUT **VICTOR MARTINEZ *IN SHAPE*** IS A HARD GUY TO BEAT!!!!....NOW LET ME JUST TELL YA, **RONNIE COLEMAN** TOLD ME PERSONALLY THAT HE **AIN'T** DONE COMPETING IN **THE OLYMPIA** AND HE SAID THAT IF HE GETS ***"IN SHAPE"*** HE KNOWS FOR A FACT ***NO ONE* CAN BEAT HIM** > ***NOT* DEXTER**, ***NOT* JAY**, ***NO ONE!!!!!!!***....I AGREE WITH **RONNIE!!!**...**LET'S GET ONE THING STRAIGHT** >> ***EVERY* PRO BODYBUILDER *FEARS*** AN **"IN SHAPE" *RONNIE COLEMAN***, IF THEY SAY THEY ***DON'T*** **"FEAR" *BIG RONNIE*** THEN THEY ARE FUCKING **LIARS**....COME ON NOW, LET'S ALL BE HONEST HERE, **WHEN IN SHAPE > *Ronnie Coleman* is bodybuilding's exorcist— he scares the living shit out of everyone!!!!**...*OH YEAH BABE*, IT'S TRUE.....LOOK, LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT > **Yo' if *Ronnie Coleman* went on an African safari, even the fucking lions would roll up**

their windows!!!....*OH YEAH BABE,* AN ***IN-SHAPE* RONNIE COLEMAN *PUTS FEAR IN EVERYONE!!!***...HEY **2010** MIGHT JUST BE ***THE RETURN*** OF **BODYBUILDING'S *REAL LIFE* "KING KONG!!!."**

SO I URGE ALL YOU **"OLYMPIANS"** TO DO YOUR **VERY BEST *THIS YEAR* 2009**, YOU BETTER **WIN *WHILE YOU STILL GOT A CHANCE,*** BECAUSE IF YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE ***RONNIE COLEMAN* NEXT YEAR** I SAY THIS TO YOU NOW **>> You got a better chance walking through a lion's cage dressed in a three-piece pork-chop suit, than you do going up against a 100% in shape Ronnie Coleman!!!**

AND BY THE WAY MY BOY ***BIG* RONNIE** LOVES EATING **RED MEAT** TOO, I'VE EATEN DINNER WITH HIM



AND HE IS DEFINITLY A **MEAT EATER!!!.. The difference in my dietary needs & Ronnie Coleman's dietary needs is > he's got a nutritionist, and I've got room service....**PLUS **BIG RONNIE**, LIKE MYSELF, LOVES ***THE LATINA BABES***, THAT MEANS HE EATS **PORK** TOO...**LATINAS ARE BIG PORK EATERS!!!....**YO, GET YOUR MIND OUT OF THE GUTTER, I'M ***NOT*** TALKIN ABOUT ***MUSH POT***, I'M TALKIN ABOUT ***PORK MEAT*** BABE...***PORK FAT RULES!!!!.***.IT'S FUNNY CAUSE I ONCE MADE ***DAVE PALUMBO* SICK**, WE WERE EATING BREAKFAST TOGETHER AND WHILE HE WAS EATING ***OATMEAL***, I ATE A **WHOLE PLATE OF *BACON*, A WHOLE PLATE OF *PORK SAUSAGE*** AND **8 EGGS *OVER EASY*** *(WHOLE EGGS BABE, NOT THAT "EGG WHTE ONLY" BULLSHIT)*...HEY HOW THE HELL DID I GET ON THIS SUBJECT, WASN'T I JUST TALKING ABOUT THE **MR.OLYMPIA**...***GEEZ,* MY MIND IS SHOT, I'M GETTING TOO OLD >>Right now I'm so bad that I have to change my underwear after every time I sneeze!!!!..Brain cells come and brain cells go, but fat cells live forever!!!....getting lucky means I find my car in the parking lott without roaming the whole lot trying to figure out where the hell I parked!!!.**

ANYWAY, I'M SURE **THE OLYMPIA** WILL BE A LOT OF FUN IN **VEGAS**...YOU JUST KNOW THAT ALL **THE EXPO GIRLS** *(ATTENTION HOES)* WILL BE WEARING THEIR ***SKIMPY LITTLE OUTFITS,*** TRYING DESPERATLY TO BE **NOTICED!!!**.... *OH YEAH BABE* AND THE USUAL GUYS WILL BE THERE WITH THEIR ***SUPER TIGHT SHIRTS*** ON WITH BARELY VISIBLE ***SYNTHOL INJECTION BRUISES*** ON THEIR BIG BARE ARMS THAT THEY WILL BE SHOWING OFF....IT'S FUNNY BECAUSE SOMETIMES WHEN I TAKE A PICTURE WITH THESE GUYS, I PUT ***MY ARM AROUND THEM*** AND MY HAND CAN FEEL **"THE HOT SPOT"** ON THEIR ***OUTTER TRICEP*** WHERE IT WAS **INJECTED!!!!** *(YEAH, THE SAME GUYS WHO TALK SHIT ABOUT ME ON THE INTERNET)*.....YO AT THESE BIG SHOWS **EVERYONE IS A *STAR*** AND **EVERYONE IS A *CELEBRITY***...IT'S COMICAL TO ME...HELL, A LOT OF FANS ***TRAIN JUST FOR THESE BIG SHOWS* >> TO WALK AROUND ALL JACKED UP !!!... *"Half the people attending the MR. OLYMPIA in Vegas are dying to be discovered and the other half are afraid that they probably will be."***

YEAH, **THE CASINOS** WILL BE FULL OF BODYBUILDERS!!!...THE **AFTER-PARTY** WILL BE FUN TOO, **THE EXPO GIRLS** WILL BE ***PLASTERED*** *(DRUNK)* AND TRYING TO GET WITH EVERY ***INDUSTRY GUY*** THEY CAN...*OH PLEASE*, **YOU KNOW IT'S THE FUCKING TRUTH, I'M JUST TELLING IT LIKE IT IS, AS I ALWAYS DO!!!!....**YO I GET **GIRLS GALORE** AT THESE ***BIG SHOWS*** AND **I'M AN UGLY MOTHERFUCKER!!!**...WHEN I GET A ***HOT GIRL*** COME UP TO ME AND TELL ME ***"GREGG YOU'RE A CUTIE,"*** I LAUGH IN HER FACE, I KNOW SHE WANTS SOMETHING FROM ME....**NICE TRY!!!....**YO BABE, THATS NOT GONNA GET YOU IN ***MD***, PLUS I ***DON'T*** CHEAT ON **MY GIRLFRIEND** EVEN THOUGH **SHE CHEATS ON ME**...***HELL MY GIRLFRIEND WILL BE THE FIRST ONE TO TELL YA THAT I'M UGLY!!!...***SO ALL YOU **FITNESS/FIGURE/EXPO GIRLS *DON'T BOTHER*, I'M UGLY & I'M TAKEN**....BUT MY BOY **ROBBIE DURAND** IS ***SINGLE*** AND OH SO READY TO MINGLE FOR THE RIGHT PIECE OF ***HOT ASS***!!..OH YEAH BABE, YOU GIRLS MIGHT JUST BE ABLE TO ***WORK HIM*** FOR A ***COVER SHOT*** OR A **MAJOR DISTRACTION SPREAD** IN ***MD***...YA SEE....SO MAKE SURE YOU GIRLS LOOK FOR **ROBBIE DURAND**, ASK FOR HIM, BUT YOU MUST BE ***HOT LOOKING*** AND **EXTRA PIGGY!!!...** *OH YEAH BABE*, TRUST ME HE WON'T TURN YOU DOWN...YA SEE THAT **ROBBIE**, I GOT YOUR BACK BROTHER, **WHAT HAPPENS IN *VEGAS*...STAYS IN *VEGAS,*** UNLESS OF COURSE ***BIG MOUTH* VALENTINO** GETS ***WIND OF IT***, THEN IN THAT CASE THE WHOLE DAMN ***MD* OFFICE FINDS OUT**...WHO LOVES YA, MY BROTHER!!!!...***"Every girl should use what Mother Nature gave her before Father Time takes it away."...*** ANYWAY SO THERE YA HAVE IT...**MY WACKY *DISTORTED*** LOOK AT THIS YEAR'S **2009 MR.OLYMPIA CONTEST**....I CAN HARDLY WAIT, ***I'M ECSTATIC!!!****...ZZZZZ...ZZZZ ...ZZZZ.* **WHAT!!!...WHAT HAPPENED??**....



OH SHIT, I'M SORRY I MUST HAVE DOZED OFF FOR A MOMENT THERE... **SEE YA IN *VEGAS*** *(GOD, I HOPE NOT)* ...***LET'S GO* VICTOR!!!!!!**

A MR. OLYMPIA STORY FROM BACK IN THE DAY..LEE HANEY STORY... IN **MARCH** OF **1987, MR. OLYMPIA *LEE HANEY*** STAYED AT MY HOUSE FOR A COUPLE DAYS, HE WAS AT ***MY GYM*** DOING A **SEMINAR** AND LATER WE WENT TO **MY PARENTS HOUSE** WHERE **MY MOTHER** MADE A HUGE DINNER OF **ITALIAN FOOD** *(THE REAL DEAL BABE, NOT NO* ***RAGU*** *BULLSHIT!!!!)*... NOW I GOTTA TELL YOU THAT ***BIG* LEE** MUST HAVE EATEN ABOUT **SIX** TO **EIGHT *MEATBALLS*** AND ABOUT **SIX** TO **EIGHT *SWEET* ITALIAN SAUSAGES** WITH ABOUT A POUND OF **MACARONI** *(PASTA TO YOU NON-ITALIANS)* WITH ***FRESH GRATED* PECORINO ROMANO CHEESE**, OH *HELL YEAH*, IT'S AN **ITALIAN *"FOOD OF LOVE THING"* BABE!!!**...LET ME JUST TELL YA **GRATED CHEESE** HAS TO SMELL LIKE ***BAD FEET*** FOR IT TO BE **GOOD**, IT CAN'T SMELL ***METALIC*** LIKE **PARMESAN CHEESE** *(YUK)*, OH HELL NO BABE!!!...I EVEN TOOK PICTURES OF **THE DINNER** WITH **LEE HANEY** SHOWING HIS ***"ITALIAN SIDE!!!!"***...LET'S GET ONE THING STRAIGHT WHEN IT COMES TO **EATING ITALIAN FOOD... *"EVERYONE BECOMES ITALIAN"*** AND WHEN IT COMES TO **MR. OLYMPIA**, IN ***LEE HANEY'S*** OWN WORDS >> ***"BIG MEN EAT BIG"***...AND WHEN ***BIG MAN* LEE** WAS FILLING HIS PLATE WITH **MOMMA VALENTINO'S *HOMEMADE*** AUTHENTIC **ITALIAN FOOD** I REMEMBER HIS **EXACT WORDS: "*COME ON GREGG, GIVE ME SOME MORE OF THOSE SAUSAGES, I JUST LOVE ITALIAN SAUSAGE"...*** *OH YEAH BABE*, **LEE HANEY** WAS DEFINITELY AN **"ITALIAN"** ON THAT DAY...***GOD BLESS...GOD BLESS*...MANGIARE!!!!** *(PRONOUNCED MUNJA... MEANS "EAT" IN ITALIAN).*

MY MOTHER LOVED FEEDING ***THE BIG MAN*** *(LEE HANEY, YA FRIGGIN PINHEADS)*. KEEP IN MIND, **ITALIAN MOMS** LOVE TO SEE SOMEONE EATING THEIR **ITALIAN COOKING,** AS A MATTER OF FACT **MOMMA VALENTINO** KEPT FEEDING **LEE *MORE & MORE* FOOD** AND ***HE KEPT ON EATING!!!***... I THINK HE SHOULD HAVE GIVEN HER CREDIT FOR THE EXTRA FEW POUNDS OF MASS HE HAD FOR THAT YEARS **1987 MR OLYMPIA**...THE FUNNY THING IS AFTER WE ALL *(LEE, MYSELF, MY FAMILY & FRIENDS)* ATE LIKE ***GAVONES***, I HAD TO DRIVE **LEE** TO THE ***AIRPORT*** ...I GUESS ALL THAT **HEAVY *ITALIAN FOOD*** MUST HAVE MADE **LEE** KINDA ***SLUGGISH*** AND ***TIRED*** BECAUSE HE ***FELL ASLEEP*** IN **MY CAR**...HERE IS THE CRAZY PART, I REMEMBER LOOKING AT HIM AND ALL I COULD SEE WAS **HIS EYES** WERE KINDA ***"HALFWAY OPEN WITH A DEAD GRAY STARE"*** JUST LIKE A **DEAD BODY**, BUT YET HE WAS **FAST ASLEEP!!!**...I THOUGHT TO MYSELF ***"OH MY GOD I HOPE LEE HANEY DIDN'T DROP DEAD IN MY CAR FROM MY MOTHER'S HEAVY ITALIAN COOKING."***

I WAS AFRAID HIS ***STOMACH BURST*** OR SOMETHING, BUT THEN I REMEMBERED MY **NEICE NICOLE** USED TO ***SLEEP WITH HER EYES PART OPEN*** JUST LIKE A **DEAD BODY** TOO!!!!... COME TO THINK OF IT, EVEN **MY KIDS** SOMETIMES **SLEEP WITH THEIR EYES PART OPEN**... IT'S KIND OF AN **EERIE FEELING** SEEING SOMEONE ***SLEEP*** WITH THEIR **EYES HALF OPEN** BECAUSE ***THEY LOOK DEAD***...BUT ANYWAY LET ME JUST SAY **LEE HANEY** IS A *VERY, VERY* **NICE GUY** AND IN ***MY OPINION*** IT'S BETWEEN **HIM** & ***RONNIE COLEMAN*** FOR WHO IS **THE GREATEST BODYBUILDER EVER...** AND THE MAN LOVES HIS **ITALIAN FOOD**, JUST LIKE **RONNIE COLEMAN**, BOTH THESE **MR. OLYMPIA *ICONS*** HAVE AN **"ITALIAN BOY"** WHO CRAVES **ITALIAN FOOD *DEEP INSIDE*** THEM...THEN AGAIN, WHO DOESN'T...**MY MOTHER'S *GRAVY*** *(SAUCE TO THE REST OF THE WORLD, GRAVY TO US ITALIANS)* HAS A WAY OF ***TRANSFORMING*** A **NON-ITALIAN** INTO BECOMING AN **ITALIAN**.

AS FOR **LEE HANEY,** HE WAS AN **INSPIRATION** TO BE AROUND AND EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE HE WOULD SPIT OUT ONE OF HIS ***"PEARLS OF WISDOM"***... I REMEMBER EATING ***BREAKFAST*** WITH **LEE** AND HE ORDERED **"WHOLE EGGS"** WHICH AT THAT TIME IN **THE 80's ERA** OF ***LOW-FAT EATING***, I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU ONLY EAT **"THE WHITES"** IF ***YOU'RE A BODYBUILDER***...**LEE** TOLD ME IN HIS ***SOUTHERN ACCENT, '"GOD MADE THE WHITE WITH THE YELLOW WHO AM I TO TAKE THEM APART"...*** HE THEN EXPLAINED, ***"THE YELLOW CONTAINS PROTEIN AND LECITHIN, A FAT FIGHTING NUTRIENT."*** AFTER THAT DAY **I HAVE NEVER EATEN JUST EGG WHITES AGAIN**...I FIGURED **"HEY IF LEE HANEY, *MR.OLYMPIA* EATS WHOLE EGGS, THEN THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME"...** GOD DAMN, HE WAS SO BIG BACK THEN, THE MAN WAS **270** WITH A **TINY WAIST** & A **TINY ASS** TOO...***NO GUT BLOAT*** AT ALL AND **LATS** THAT WERE **SO BIG** THEN ***HUNG OFF*** HIS **TORSO**, EVEN **SHAWN RAY** WAS TALKING TO ME ABOUT **HANEY'S *LATS*** LOOKING LIKE THAT **HUNG OFF HIS BODY!!!**...***NO ONE*** HAD **LATS** LIKE THAT, ***NOT*** EVEN **TODAY!!!!!....**I'VE BEEN AROUND YOUR BIGGEST ***MASS MONSTERS*** IN **BODYBUILDING** BUT NEVER DID ANY OF THEM HAVE THE **SHOULDER WIDTH** OR ***TINY WAIST*** THAT **LEE HANEY** HAD**When reading about this year's Mr. Olympia results, as far as all my Ramblin Freak fans are concerned > It ain't over till the fat guy writes his next column...GV**

TILL NEXT MONTH I BID YOU ALL A GREAT BIG ***FUCK OFF.***

By Anthony L. Almada, MSc, FISSN

Shred of Evidence

Show Me The Proof!

WAXY MAIZE STARCH

ULTIMATE SLOW-DIGESTING/ LOW-GLYCEMIC CARB?

Back in 1908, a tiny agricultural export from China landed on the shores of the USA. It was a unique corn kernel that, when sliced in half and viewed, looked as if it was filled with wax. This golden, unpolished jewel became known as waxy maize (corn) starch (WMS).

In 1942, the first crop of WMS destined for commercial use was planted by two different starch companies, and processed in the state of Indiana.

By the 1950s, WMS had made its way into laundry starch, glues and adhesive paste (I recall eating paste as a pre-playground fuel in third grade…), and in pie filling, salad dressings, and canned foods as a stabilizer and thickening agent.[1]

WMS, unlike generic cornstarch, is made up of a very high amount (up to 100 percent) of amylopectin. Amylopectin is a long chain of glucose (AKA dextrose) molecules that also has 'side chains' that branch off, like on and off ramps to and from an interstate highway. Plain, off-the-shelf cornstarch is comprised of amylopectin, but also a notable amount of amylose— which is a long, coiled glucose chain without the branching.

Jump forward 50 years to one of the top sports nutrition labs of the day, Ball State University in Indiana. For almost two decades, research focusing on carbohydrates, performance, muscle glycogen use and recovery was being pumped out of Dr. David Costill's lab. In the early 1990s, Costill's lab put WMS to two different head-to-head tests: 1) how does it perform in glycemic (blood sugar) and insulinemic (blood insulin) responses as a pre-exercise fuel, and influence fat and carb burning, and 2) how does it compare in muscle glycogen recovery after exhaustive exercise?

In the first, study 10 elite male cyclists (I know— what the heck does a study using cyclists have to do with muscle development? Stay with me on this one…) were given one of four different supplements, at four different times: 1) dextrose, 2) WMS (100 percent amylopectin), 3) resistant starch (resistant to digestion and slowly/poorly absorbed; 70 percent amylose and 30 percent amylopectin), and 4) artificially-sweetened placebo with zero calories. All four were flavored and sweetened, and given as a drink (18.7 percent carbohydrate solution) in a dose of 1 gram per kilogram bodyweight, 30 minutes before a 2-hour ride on a stationary bike.[2]

The blood glucose and insulin 'spike' response was 2-2.5 times higher when dextrose was given, compared to WMS. This appears to be the first human study showing WMS to be a low-glycemic/low-insulinemic carbohydrate. Fifteen minutes into the exercise bout, all treatment groups showed a fall in insulin (a hallmark of exercise), and a drop in blood sugar below where the starting point was prior to receiving the supplement. In the last 30 minutes of the ride, the subjects were asked to do a 'maximum output' ride. Dextrose and WMS produced significantly greater work output than placebo, but were no different from each other. Carbohydrate and fat burning did not differ between dextrose and WMS.

In the second study, eight elite male cyclists (hang on— there is a connection here) were put on a medium-carbohydrate (55 percent carb/25 percent fat/20 percent protein) diet for two days prior to a glycogen-depletion exercise bout.[3] This was repeated four separate times, with one of the following four carbohydrate supplements being the sole source of carbohydrates after glycogen depletion: 1) dextrose, 2) maltodextrin, 3) WMS (100 percent amylopectin), and 4) resistant starch (100 percent amylose). A biopsy of the quad was taken right after exercise.

Carbohydrate supplements were then provided in liquid form in an amount of 6.5 grams/kilo bodyweight, which the cyclists consumed over the next 12 hours before sleep. The next morning, they returned for a biopsy (the ultimate eye opener!). The dextrose, maltodextrin, and WMS treatments did not statistically differ in muscle glycogen recovery, but the greatest percent increase (from post-exercise concentrations) was seen with dextrose.

In 2002, the same university lab that invented the glycemic index took WMS into the lab and compared a 75-gram dose of WMS to maltodextrin, sucrose ('table sugar'), and a high-amylose cornstarch— all in a beverage format.[4] Maltodextrin and sucrose showed approximately 1.6-2.9 times higher glycemic responses in the first 15-45 minutes after drinking.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

NEW COLUMN!



This past July, a new study on WMS further confirmed WMS as being a premier slow-digesting, low-glycemic/low-insulin-spiking carbohydrate. Researchers from Purdue University published a 4-hour glycemic index study comparing 50 grams of WMS to a 78 percent maltodextrin/22 percent sucrose mix (MS), and to white bread.[5]

The WMS and MS mix were given in a sweetened gel form. The glycemic response of WMS was nearly identical to that of white bread, but two to three times lower, and slower than the MS mix, in the first 60 minutes after dosing. At 3 and 4 hours after the dose, only white bread and WMS did not lead to blood sugar falling below pre-supplement concentrations. The insulin spike of WMS was about half that of white bread in the first 30-60 minutes, and about four times lower than the MS mix. The total insulin increase was almost three times higher with MS, and just under two times higher with white bread, compared to waxy maize starch.

How does this relate to the physique/strength athlete? These studies confirm that waxy maize starch is a slow-digesting, low-glycemic carbohydrate, which suggests that it could be used as a pre-workout fuel by persons prone to 'blood sugar' swings or those spending 2 or more hours in the gym.

WMS may fuel training as well as dextrose, too. The glycogen response of WMS— although known only after a 24-hour loading period following glycogen depletion, which is difficult to achieve with resistance training— is at least similar to dextrose and maltodextrin. The soft and smaller insulin spike that comes from WMS could be amplified by the addition of whey protein or branched-chain amino acids, but these studies have yet to be performed.

What we still don't know is how quickly WMS moves out of the stomach— the gastric-emptying rate— as it has never been studied. Although the 'osmolality' of WMS is much lower than dextrose or maltodextrin, the absence of any studies measuring transit through the gut— and several low- and slow-glycemic and insulinemic response studies— suggest that even if it were fast, it would not overcome the key, rate-limiting steps of digestion and absorption. ■

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OSCAR ARDON
The BODYBUILDING ALCHEMIST

By Oscar Ardon



I want to begin my first column by giving Steve Blechman the gratitude and appreciation for giving me this awesome opportunity. Steve has thought of many ways to make the magazine better, through delivering cutting-edge information, science-based principles & studies to help the reader be more informed, as well as getting the top, most elite bodybuilders in the world to give you their advice and their guidance on all your fitness & bodybuilding goals. He has also given retired bodybuilding legends such **Dorian Yates, Shawn Ray, Flex Wheeler** and others a voice and a forum for us to learn from them, as well as have access to their behind-the-scenes stories of when they competed and ruled the sport. That's invaluable information for the aspiring bodybuilder who dares to dream that they, too, can be on top one day. So it gives me great honor and respect to be part of TEAM MD and help Steve continue to create the most amazing, most hardcore bodybuilding magazine on the planet and be among the superstars that I have only had the pleasure of knowing through the magazine itself.







Merriam-Webster's definition of alchemy: *a power or process of transforming something common into something special.*

I have been involved in the sport as a competitor and a coach for almost 20 Years. I am in my mid-30s now, so that deep, intense passion began in my early teenage years. I remember opening one of my first issues of Muscular Development and seeing **Lee Haney** on the cover and staring at his physique. I marveled and wondered how someone could look like that and have so much thick, dense, ripped muscle per square inch of his body.

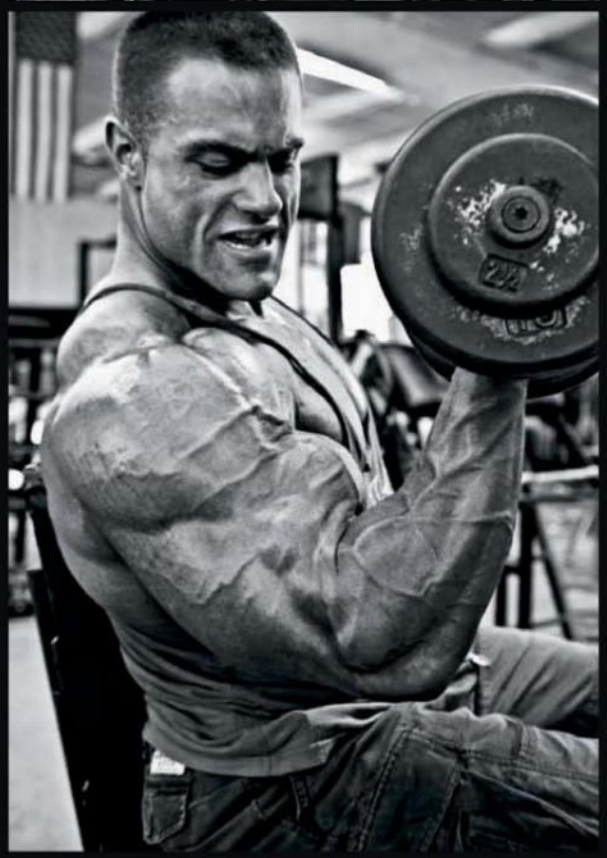
I was hooked. Something within me respected that, appreciated it and I wanted to learn *everything* I could on how to get that exaggerated, superhero look that spoke of power & strength. I devoured every nutritional book I could find. I bought every exercise book that I saw. If it was related to bodybuilding, I had it. I read hundreds of books. I remember staying up late till 3:00 a.m. almost every day, reading, learning, and writing down notes, thoughts and ideas. I was a man (actually, a teenager at the time) on a mission and I was applying everything I learned on myself.

Within 3-4 years I had gone from 120-pound gymnast to a hulking 230-pound bodybuilder, and at the time I had no idea or knowledge of what performance-enhancing agents were. It was during that time that I had pictures of the top IFBB champions plastered all over my room walls and in the back of my high school notebooks. Pictures of **Lee Haney**, **Rich Gaspari**, **Lee Labrada**, **Albert Beckles**, **Shawn Ray** and many others. It was a great time of my life. It was a time of learning, growing, maturing and evolving. It wasn't until I began competing that I developed a tremendous amount of respect and humbleness for the sport and for all the athletes involved.

Competing as a bodybuilder was one of the hardest, most challenging things that I have ever done. It was a 24/7 involvement, requiring a great deal of extreme hard work, 100 percent devotion and total discipline. In the first show, I worked so hard but I had no idea what it was like, except for what I read and saw in magazines. At that time there were no trainers or coaches

NEW COLUMN!





PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

like myself— no Hany Rambod— no Chad Nicholls. So there was a lot of trial & error and experimentation to see what works and what doesn't.

I still have old journals that have the diet philosophy & ideas and training programs of that early time and I see how much everything has evolved since then. I learned as I went along. It was on-the-job training. It was during these early years that I began to assist and help others reach their goals and dreams. It was while I was helping a few friends of mine get ready for their show at the time that I began to see a 'certain' common denominator that began to reveal itself in the psychological & mental aspect of the preparation. It went beyond the training and the diet. It was something that affected the END RESULT (winning). It was 'something' that when mastered, harnessed and controlled, would unleash the power responsible for all success, whether onstage or in anything that you wanted to do in life.

That 'something' is the power of the human mind. Again, I devoured every book, every article, audio, video, science journal or anything that had to do with empowering the human mind, controlling your thoughts and realizing the human potential. It was this newfound knowledge at an early age that allowed me the opportunity to help over 500 athletes. And not just athletes, but common people who had never accomplished their dreams or are in a rut or never realized their potential and settled for so much less that what they are capable of.

It has been said that most humans only use 5 percent of their mind potential and geniuses like Albert Einstein may be as high as 8-10 percent. Can you imagine what we could do if we were able to tap 100 percent of the human mind? It is the use of our minds that has allowed us to progress and advance more in the past 60 years than in the past 2,000 years! We have gone to the moon, created airplanes, explored space, created the telephone, harnessed electricity, invented television, composed music and the list goes on and on. All of this was created by us human beings! Our potential seems limitless. We are only limited by our thoughts and our inability to use our minds properly. We are unlimited beings, with the potential to create our lives the way we desire.

So what does this have to do with bodybuilding? EVERYTHING!!! The mind is the limiting factor, whether someone will be a success or not. Not genetics, not drugs, not the most perfect training or diet program, but the mind. And ironically, that is the part of the prep or the goal-getting part that is least understood and it's given the least amount of attention! Something so powerful to achieving a goal should receive a lot more consideration and when properly used will yield amazing results! It is my intention of this column to educate, instruct, motivate and help every reader who picks up this magazine to become and make the most of themselves and reach places and gains that they didn't think were possible.

We are not born champions. Champions are created through hard work, discipline, consistency and having a certain mindset that makes them believe that the impossible is possible. At birth, we can't control what height we are going to be, the color of our skin or even the type of


Evan Centaponi


Orville Burke


Kai Greene

hair we will have. Yes, we will inherit certain genetic traits that our parents will pass on to us, but what we do with that is up to us.

We admire the accomplishments of Michael Phelps, Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan and other top athletes, as if they were untouchable or from another planet. But what makes them so great is that on the other side of the spectrum there are too many common people. We were all born to soar. We were all meant to be great! The quality of greatness & achievement is not just in some of us, IT IS IN ALL OF US! We are ALL meant to succeed. The creator blessed us as equally as He blessed Phelps, Woods or Jordan. They weren't given more at birth. It's what they did and believed in their lives that allowed them to be great. And you can, too!

I have been fortunate to have worked with many different people from all walks of life and different backgrounds. I have seen how the proper use of the mind has taken athletes from almost last place to first place in one year. How it has taken people from scarcity to abundance, from a negative way of life to a completely happy and positive life.



I have used some of my principles to help **Orville Burke** go from doing a regional show in NY to making the top 6 Olympia, watched **Desmond Miller** go from a local NPC competitor to an overall National Champion, helped **Kevin English** go from a 17th-place finish to his first IFBB pro win, and also helped **Evan Centaponi** achieve what most people in the sport thought would never happen— win his pro debut against veterans of the sport.

Last but not least my training partner, **Kai Greene**— man, when I began working with him in 2006 after almost taking next to last in almost every show, he couldn't even dare to dream that he would win the Arnold Classic and be a favorite to win the Olympia and have two amazing contracts! I am so happy for him, because I know how many years he struggled to barely keep it together. But our hard work paid off and he's finally getting what he deserves. Mentally, Kai is a warrior and he is mentally prepared & ready to follow his dream and fulfill his destiny in Vegas!

I mention these athletes to simply demonstrate that the power of the human mind can change your life. In the following upcoming issues I will share with you some techniques (mental, diet & training) that have proven to work extremely well and methods that I have used to raise people from common lives of hardship backgrounds to reach their dreams and achieve a success that they thought was no longer possible and super-exceed their own expectations. Stay tuned for the next issue; for now, I leave you with this poem.

Think Positive

If you think you are beaten, you are
If you think you dare not, you don't
Success begins with your own will...
It's all in your state of mind.
Life's battles are not always won
By those who are stronger or faster;
Sooner or later the person who wins
Is the person who thinks he can! ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL AND BILL COMSTOCK

STEROID OF THE MONTH

Anabolic Pharmacology

By Seth Roberts, M.A.

Pharmacology is the study of drugs and their effects. Anabolic pharmacology is the study of drugs that have growth-promoting effects on muscle. This column will explore anabolic pharmacology by profiling a different anabolic drug and its effects each month. The focus of discussion this month will be the anabolic androgenic steroid, Anadrol.

ANADROL



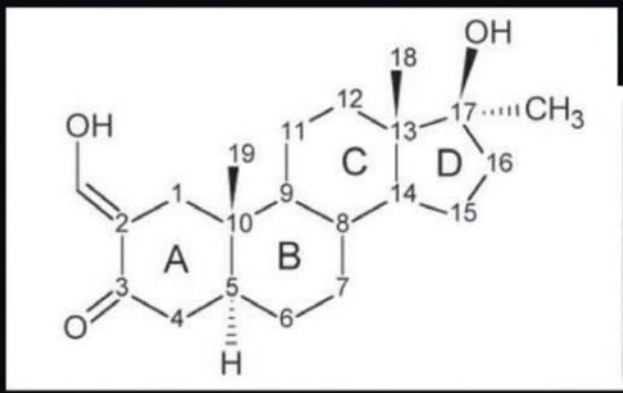




PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

Anadrol is a synthetic derivative of DHT with the generic name oxymetholone. It is considered to be a very potent and toxic oral steroid. This is due to the fact that Anadrol has a long half-life, about 8 hours, and several active metabolites.[1,2] Anadrol, as a DHT derivative, is incapable of being converted to estrogenic metabolites. Additionally, since this steroid is already 5-alpha reduced, it is not acted upon by 5-alpha reductase—but likely inhibits the action of this enzyme.

Anadrol has the reputation of being very potent, causing drastic size and strength gains. It is also well known for its propensity for causing side effects including edema, gynecomastia, balding, acne, increased aggressiveness and liver toxicity.[3]





The average anabolic-to-androgenic ratio reported in the medical literature is 5.8. Anadrol does not bind strongly to the androgen receptor, but it has been shown to activate the androgen receptor.[4,5] Anadrol is metabolized in the body, in part, to 17-alpha-methyl DHT (17AMDHT).[1] Although Anadrol does not bind to the sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG), 17AMDHT does bind as strongly to the AR and SHBG as DHT, with slight affinity for the PR.[1,6]

Anadrol is considered to be exceptional at raising red blood cell levels. The fact is, all androgens cause this effect to some degree and Anadrol is not the most potent for producing this effect.[7,8] The strong binding of 17AMDHT to SHBG displaces testosterone and estrogen into the free circulation. This free estrogen can lead to gynecomastia.

Although Anadrol has a reputation for dramatic size and strength gains, it is well known that these gains tend to disappear once treatment is ended. This is due to the fact that only a portion of the gains made while using Anadrol are attributable to actual

muscle growth. This is likely due to a large degree of water retention brought on through inhibition of 11-beta hydroxylase, which would also explain the bloating and elevated blood pressure that most people report while using this drug.

Anadrol is well known for its propensity for raising liver enzymes and with long-term treatment, causing liver damage. This is due to the C-17 alkylation that makes oral administration possible, and the relatively large amount of drug that one must ingest to reach therapeutic levels.

Much has been made of the fact that Anadrol seems to cause gynecomastia. Anadrol cannot be converted to estrogen, so many theories have been put forth to explain this effect. Some have theorized that Anadrol binds directly to the estrogen receptor, but there is no scientific evidence to support this. Others have blamed this effect on progestational activity of Anadrol. Anadrol has been shown in the literature to have anti-progestational effects.[9] Antagonism of the progesterone receptor has been shown to upregulate the estrogen receptor. This, coupled with the displacement of estrogen from SHBG, is the likely culprit in Anadrol-induced gyno.

Mifepristone, a progesterone receptor antagonist, has also been shown to induce gynecomastia when taken chronically. Like methandrostenolone, Anadrol elicits an increase in corticosteroid-binding globulin (CBG)— which is contrary to most other AAS. Anadrol, unlike methandrostenolone, actually causes a slight decrease in non-plasma bound cortisol.[10] Anadrol decreases TBG pretty strongly, resulting in increased T3 uptake.[10] ■

Seth Roberts is a former pharmaceutical research scientist with over 10 years of pharmacological research in the discovery and development of novel therapeutics. Seth's new book, ANABOLIC PHARMACOLOGY, *is available at www.Ergogens.com. [© Seth Roberts, 2009. All rights reserved. For informational purposes only, not to be considered as medical advice or an endorsement of the use of illegal substances.]*

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COMING SOON...



SUPPLEMENT SUPER STORE

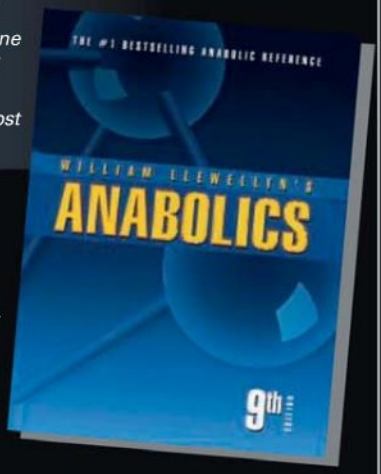
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ASK THE EXPERT

ANABOLICS Q&A

By William Llewellyn

ANABOLICS Q&A is a monthly session with William Llewellyn, author of the bestselling anabolic steroid reference guide, William Llewellyn's ANABOLICS, 9th edition. William is widely regarded as one of the world's foremost authorities on the use of performance-enhancing substances by athletes and bodybuilders. If you have a drug or supplement-related question that you would like to direct to William, don't hold back. Please e-mail it to QandA@AnabolicsBook.com. William will answer the most interesting and pertinent questions right here each month.



Superdrol and D-Bol

Q: How would you compare Superdrol to Dianabol? Which one is stronger? Safer? Better? I am trying to decide what to buy. Superdrol is much cheaper and I can get it from a store. Will it work as well?

A: It is always difficult to draw direct effectiveness comparisons between two steroids, as dosage plays a very relevant part in determining which will be more effective. In many cases, you would get a strong effect from either drug based simply on how much you are taking.

We could make milligram-for-milligram comparisons, but these don't always fit. For example, Anadrol (oxymetholone) is generally much more effective at building muscle than Dianabol (methandrostenolone) when looked at on a tablet-for-tablet basis. But the drug itself is actually weaker when we evaluate it based on the milligram amount. So which is actually the more potent drug? That's difficult to answer. Most would regard Anadrol as more powerful.

On the same note, is it difficult comparing Superdrol (methasteron) to methandrostenolone on a simple 'which is more powerful' standard. So bear with me a little. I can tell you, based on its properties, that methandrostenolone is more ideally-suited for anabolism. This is based mainly on the fact that it is a potent anabolic steroid that also exhibits some estrogenic effect. The drug converts (aromatizes) to 17a-methyl-estradiol in the body, which is a very potent synthetic estrogen. Estrogens are also involved in muscle tissue repair and growth, and drugs with inherent estrogenicity (such as testosterone, oxymetholone, and methandrostenolone) tend to be better muscle builders than drugs that have no such activity.

On a milligram-for-milligram basis, methasteron is actually considered to be more potent than methandrostenolone. This is based on studies examining the effect of these drugs on castrated laboratory rats. While often relevant to human pharmacology, these tests do not always accurately predict which drugs will be the most favored by human bodybuilders looking for extra muscle mass.

Don't underestimate its potency, though. Methasteron is a strong muscle-building drug, too. It also seems to be a strongly liver-toxic drug, and has been linked to a couple of serious cases of clinical liver toxicity. I'd wager to think that D-Bol has a better safety record. Then again, methandrostenolone is fairly liver-toxic, too. Although serious liver damage is pretty rare with all oral steroids, both drugs warrant respect.

Clomid vs. Nolvadex

Q: Years ago, you wrote an article recommending Nolvadex instead of Clomid for PCT. What do you think now, years later? A lot of people are recommending aromatase inhibitors for PCT. Do you still like Nolvadex for PCT?

A: Yes, I remember the article well. For those who haven't read it, I basically favored the use of Nolvadex over Clomid based on a couple of studies that examined the effects of continued treatment of both on testosterone secretion.[1,2] It appears that after as little as a couple of weeks, Clomid begins to desensitize the pituitary to GnRH (gonadotropin-releasing hormone). This is the hormone that tells your pituitary to release luteinizing

ILLUSTRATION BY JERRY BECK



hormone (LH), which in turn gives your testes the message to secrete testosterone. It is a complex system with various points of balance.

The regular use of Clomid may slightly disturb one of these levels, likely due to a weak intrinsic estrogenic effect on the pituitary (remember, these are estrogens/anti-estrogens). Nolvadex, on the other hand, only appears to increase pituitary sensitivity to GnRH, probably because it is more purely anti-estrogenic here.

But let's get back to basics a little. Both of these drugs are from the same family, and have many of the same biological effects. Both can increase testosterone production in men, and have potential application in Post-Cycle Therapy (PCT). For the last several years, I have been detailing the Program for Wellness Restoration (PoWeR) PCT protocols in *ANABOLICS*, which have been clinically studied and shown to exhibit a very favorable effect on testosterone recovery at the conclusion of steroid therapy. They involve the combined use of HCG, Clomid, and Nolvadex. Clomid is used for a shorter period of time than Nolvadex, perhaps because the physicians were also worried about its longer-term use and pituitary desensitization. Whatever the reason, the program seems to work. No other PCT program has been studied and proven effective in the same manner.

In retrospect, I think my original article overexamined what need not be a major decision. Used as part of a reasonable PCT program, both drugs can be very helpful. And again, I generally like them both for this purpose. Still, for those who use anti-estrogens for more than just short-term PCT drugs, I believe Nolvadex should be favored for the originally-stated reason. It also tends to have fewer side effects, though Clomid is generally well-tolerated. I am not in support of AIs for PCT, as there is nothing substantial to look at except empirical observations. This is a delicate system to recover, and I prefer to recommend what is known to work, as opposed to what is theorized to work.

Winstrol for Women's Weight Loss?

Q: I have some extra weight that I can't get rid of, left over from three pregnancies. What do you think about using Winstrol to help lose this weight? Is it an effective and safe drug for women?

A: In the spectrum of available anabolic steroids, Winstrol (stanozolol) is among the more favorable to women. Provided that low doses and short durations are used, side effects are usually not a major issue. However, there are safer drugs to look at for fat loss before steroids.

Steroids are, after all, derivatives of male hormones. As such, they have potentially strong cosmetic side effects in women when misused, many of them permanent. Steroids, in my experience, are also not the most effective fat-loss drugs to begin with. I think they benefit fat mass more by improving muscle size and overall metabolism, than by directly inhibiting fat retention.



Drugs such as beta-agonists (clenbuterol), thyroid hormones, HGH, and many stimulants favorably alter body composition as well, and are often much more popular with bodybuilders for fat loss. Most of these drugs are probably better from an efficacy standpoint, and do not carry the same risks of excess androgenicity. Should you decide to use stanozolol, I would recommend that you take great care to closely monitor your physical changes. Discontinue the drug immediately if any virilizing side effects become apparent. Often there are subtle changes at first, such as cracking in the voice or minor changes in one's pattern of hair growth. Be safe.

PoWeR PCT Program:

All drugs initiated at the same time, at the conclusion of steroid therapy.

- **HCG:** 2,500 IU every other day, for 16 days.
- **Clomid:** 50 mg twice per day, for 30 days.
- **Nolvadex:** 20 mg per day, for 45 days. ■

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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Anabolic Research Update

By William Llewellyn



Warning: Opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect the views of this magazine's publisher or its editorial staff. MD does not condone any form of illegal drug use for bodybuilding or for any recreational purpose. MD also does not condone abuse of legal drugs for any purpose.

New Health Effects Study on Deca

Researchers at the department of neurosciences for Uppsala University in Sweden recently undertook a very detailed exploration of the effects of nandrolone decanoate on more than three-dozen different proteins, receptors, and enzymes in rats.[1] It appears to be the first detailed examination of such a broad range of biological activities.

The focus of the study was to better evaluate and understand the potential negative health aspects of steroid abuse. The study involved administering either 3 mg/kg (low dosage) or 15 mg/kg (high dosage) of nandrolone decanoate to the animals each day, for 14 days. As expected, administration of this anabolic steroid altered a number of hormones, tissue enzyme, and protein expressions. The most significant changes have been detailed below, along with the direction of change (+ or -).

Some of the changes the study demonstrated were positive. For example, the high-dose nandrolone group lost significant bodyweight compared to low-dose and control animals. This reduction was due to diminished fat mass. There were also reductions in blood glucose and insulin levels, suggesting the improved management of sugar and insulin as a result of steroid therapy. This may be directly related to the reduced fat mass, and potentially improved overall metabolism.

The expression of beta-3 and estrogen receptors was reduced in adipose tissue as well, but may also have been linked to a reduction in overall fat mass. Many other key metabolic aspects were not altered, such as aromatase enzyme expression, androgen receptor expression (though there appeared to be trends of increase), and growth hormone expression.

One of the most important negative findings of the study was a reduction in adiponectin blood levels and adipose tissue expression. We haven't been hearing a lot about this facet of steroid use, but adiponectin is indeed an important hormone for human health. It is secreted from your fat cells, but in inverse relationship to the amount of fat mass you retain. So when your fat mass is low, your fat cells secret higher levels of this hormone.

Adiponectin has been shown to display beneficial properties with regard to insulin sensitivity and diabetes risk. It also counters certain pro-atherogenic (heart disease-supporting) activities in the body.

The adiponectin levels declined, even though fat mass declined. The researchers speculated that the reduced levels of adiponectin might be directly related to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease with steroid abuse. The researchers also identified some of the changes linked to high blood pressure, which involve the downregulation of 11b-OHase and a1b-adrenoceptor levels.

Changes With AAS Use

• *Serum Hormone Levels:*
Glucose (-)
Insulin (-)
Adiponectin (-)
Corticosterone (-)

• *Pituitary (mRNA):*
Prolactin (+)
LH (-)
Progesterone Receptor (+)

• *Testes (mRNA):*
17b-HSD (-)

• *Adrenal (mRNA):*
5a-Reductase I (-)
11b-OHase (-)
HMGCR (-)
ACTH receptor (+)

• *Kidney (mRNA):*
a1b-adrenoceptor (-)
Glucocorticoid receptor (-)
Mineral corticoid receptor (-)

• *Adipose (mRNA):*
Adiponectin (-)
Glucorticoid receptor (-)
Estrogen receptor (-)
Beta-3 Adrenoceptor (-)

PHOTO BY PER BERNAL

Steroids and Quadriplegia

Another study of interest was recently published, which examined the effects of the anabolic steroid oxandrolone (commonly known as Anavar) in a group of men with quadriplegia, characterized by total loss of motor activity in arms and legs.[2] The researches wanted to see if this drug would improve skeletal muscle mass and pulmonary function.

The men received a dosage of 20 milligrams per day for a total of eight weeks. This level of use has become sort of a standard dosage for oxandrolone as of late, and is of relevance to both bodybuilders and patients looking for lean mass gains.

The study resulted in both significant improvements and risks. To begin with, the men noticed a 1.9 percent increase in total lean body mass. Muscle mass of the arms increased over 5 percent. More importantly, perhaps, tests of pulmonary function showed a 2.2 percent improvement as a result of steroid therapy.

The negative changes were mainly in the hepatic and cardiovascular systems. Blood cholesterol levels were substantially skewed by oxandrolone. High-density lipoprotein (good) cholesterol decreased by 31.8 percent. At the same time, low-density lipoprotein (bad) cholesterol increased by a staggering 41.2 percent. This shift in total HDL to LDL ratio— which estimates the cardiovascular disease risks better than total cholesterol measurements— would be troubling for patients at high risk of heart disease. Given that these patients are sedentary in nature, their body mass (higher fat percentage) may already reflect elevated disease risk.

There were also substantial increases in liver enzyme activities, ranging from about 10 percent to more than 65 percent in some patients. These levels declined within 12 weeks of discontinuing therapy, however, and were not associated with liver damage or dysfunction. While the lean mass and pulmonary effects of oxandrolone were encouraging, care must be taken to better examine cardiovascular disease risks before such therapy is made widespread.

Testosterone the Antidepressant

A study just conducted at Columbia University examined the effects of supraphysiological levels of testosterone on dysthymia.[3] Dysthymia (dysthymic disorder) is characterized as a low-grade form of chronic depression. It usually lasts for many years, though is not as serious in symptoms as severe depressive episodes. An observer might describe someone with dysthymia as being in an unhappy 'funk,' as opposed to being an outright-depressed person.

This study examined the effect of testosterone cypionate (200 milligrams given every 10 days for six weeks) in a group of men with this disorder, and also having low or low-normal levels of testosterone (less than 350 ng/dL). Remission of dysthymia occurred in 53.8 percent of the patients receiving testosterone cypionate, and only 10 percent of the patients receiving placebo.

This study suggests a few things. For one, it reaffirms that low-grade depression is often associated with low testosterone levels in older men. Andropause, or 'male menopause,' is characterized by both physical and mental performance declines. A sudden adult onset of depression does indeed appear to be one common psychological complaint, along with loss of mental energy, memory, and libido. The paper also suggests (as many physicians seem to agree) that a testosterone level of 250 ng/dL is too low to be considered a cutoff point for 'normal.' Symptoms often still occur with higher levels.

Lastly, the study suggests that a corrective (or slightly above corrective) level of testosterone administration can be a very effective therapy for mild chronic depression in older men. This paper might also underline that the first course of therapy in older men with minor depression should be to check and correct hormonal imbalances, not administer psychoactive drugs.

Testosterone Replacement for Women?

Small doses of methyltestosterone have been used in various female menopausal medications for many years. They tend to support libido and energy of the patient, and thus are generally viewed as offering psychological benefits. A new study, however, suggests that there may be some tangible physical health benefits for women taking testosterone as well.[4]

The study examined what effect oral testosterone undecanoate (40 milligrams per day) would have on markers of systemic inflammation, when added to an estrogen-replacement regimen (estradiol valerate 2 mg/day). For those unfamiliar, 40 milligrams is one capsule per day of the oral androgen preparation Andriol (unavailable in the United States).

Testosterone had no effect on inflammatory mediators IL-6, TNF-alpha, or homocysteine. It did, however, significantly reduce levels of C-reactive protein. There were no adverse effects with this level of testosterone use.

Although far off, we may see a day when more comprehensive hormone-replacement programs are readily offered to women, including both androgen and estrogen medications. ■

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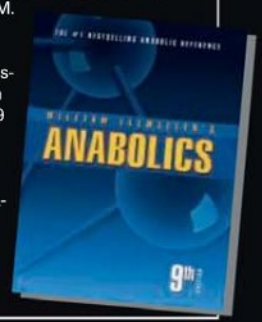
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AnabolicEdge

By José Antonio, Ph.D.

Androgens, SARMs, and More Beef on Your Bones

Blood Levels of Androgens Affect Androgen Receptor Levels

Androgens work by binding to the AR (or androgen receptor). Scientists have been looking for ways to take advantage of this, inasmuch as much of the anabolic response of androgens or anabolic steroids is mediated via the AR. A study was done to determine the effect of endogenous circulating testosterone (T) on muscle androgen receptor (AR) responses to an acute bout of resistance exercises (RE). Male subjects performed a knee extension exercise protocol on two occasions separated by one to three weeks. Rest preceded one trial (i.e., control [CON] trial) and a high-volume upper-body RE protocol designed to increase circulating testosterone preceded the other trial (i.e., high T [HT] trial).

And what did they discover? HT significantly increased T concentrations above resting values (+16%). Granted that's an increase, but it isn't too dramatic. Testosterone area under the time curve during HT exceeded the control condition by 14 percent. Also, muscle AR content during the HT trial exceeded the corresponding control value. Suffice it to say that acute elevations in circulating T potentiated muscle AR content followed weight training.[1] This suggests that one of the mechanisms governing muscle hypertrophy is the effect of exercise on circulating T levels; this in turn upregulates the AR, which subsequently impacts T binding to the AR. The end result? A bigger slab of beef on your bones!

SARMs

I love SARMs— molecules that give you the best of androgens (anabolic effect in muscle) while minimizing any side effects. What will sports-governing bodies do when athletes take this stuff wholesale, and are showing zero side effects? The mechanisms responsible for the tissue-selective activity of SARMs (selective androgen receptor modulators) aren't completely known, and the pharmacokinetic (PK)/pharmacodynamic (PD) relationships are poorly described as well.

In a nutshell, the safety and efficacy of testosterone use among HIV-infected women is supported by science. So why is the mainstream press so anti-steroid?

Scientists recently studied a new SARM, LGD-3303 [9-chloro-2-ethyl-1-methyl-3-(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-3H-pyrrolo[3,2-f]quino lin-7(6H)-one], in a castrated rat model of androgen deficiency. LGD-3303 has potent activity on levator ani muscle, but is a partial agonist on the preputial gland and ventral prostate.

What? In English, that means it does make skeletal muscle grow and to a much lesser extent, accessory sex organs. I know what you're thinking; what if it made my p@#$% grow? Not possible.

OK, back to the research. Despite the greater muscle activity relative to prostate activity, local tissue concentrations of LGD-3303 were higher in the prostate than in the levator ani muscle. And this means what? Apparently, LGD-3303 has SARM properties that are independent of its pharmacokinetic profile, suggesting that the principal mechanism for tissue-selective activity is due to changes in the molecular interactions at the level of the androgen receptor.[2]

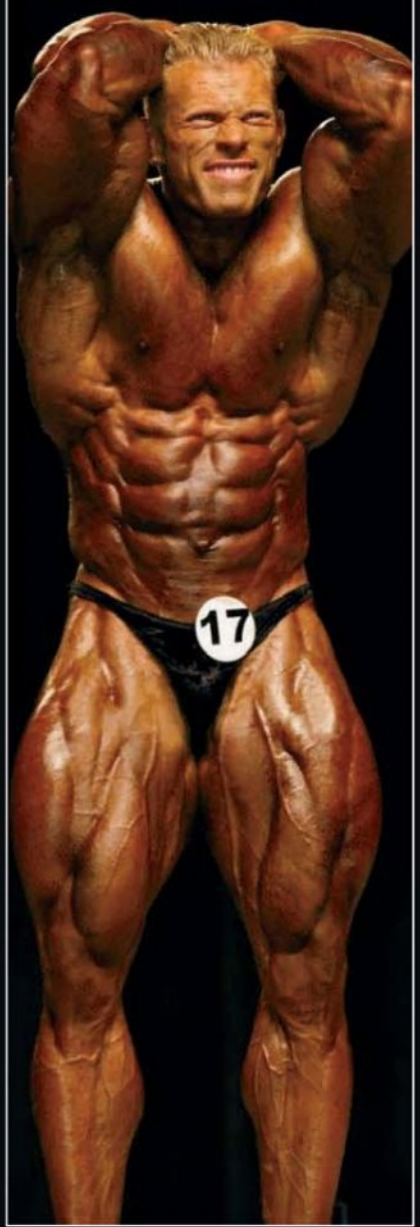
Once scientists can tease out all the factors that govern the effects of SARMs, I'd imagine this new class of drugs will make anabolic steroids look like typewriters— while SARMs are super-high-speed computers.

Androgens for Women

If androgens are so bad for you, if athletes are dying left and right (or is it right and left?) because of their use, then why is it that women can take them? Women who are severely immune-compromised, no less! Go figure.

Doctors have known that androgen deficiency is common in HIV-infected women. So what are the long-term effects of transdermal testosterone application on body composition, bone mineral density, quality of life, and safety on these women? Twenty-five HIV-infected women were randomized to receive transdermal testosterone (300 micrograms twice weekly) or identical placebo over 18 months. That's a small dose. But like ALL things, dose and duration are critically

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important. Let's see what happened.

No statistically significant differences were seen between the groups at baseline. The discontinuation rate was 16 percent, and did not differ between treatment groups (P=0.24). Free testosterone increased over 18 months in the treated group, and testosterone was well-tolerated and did not affect lipids, liver, or safety indices. Lean mass and body mass index increased in response to testosterone, whereas fat mass didn't change. And furthermore, testosterone increased bone mineral density at the hip. And last but certainly not least, testosterone significantly improved mood (less depression) and problems affecting sexual function. In a nutshell, the safety and efficacy of testosterone use among HIV-infected women is supported by science.[3] So why is the mainstream press so anti-steroid?

COX-2— Just Say 'No'

My general advice to athletes is don't take any painkillers, unless you are in such severe pain that it hampers activities of daily living. But if you can handle the pain, then by all means, let your body go through its normal recovery processes. Anti-inflammatory strategies are often used to reduce muscle pain and soreness that can result from super-intense exercise. But studies suggest that components of the acute inflammatory response may be required for muscle repair and growth. Thus, scientists used a 'synergist ablation' model of skeletal muscle hypertrophy, along with the specific COX-2 inhibitor NS-398, to look at the effect of COX-2 in overload-induced muscle growth in mice.

Treatment with NS-398 blunted the increases in mass and protein content in overloaded muscles, compared to vehicle-treated controls. Additionally, the COX-2 inhibitor decreased activity of the urokinase type plasminogen activator, macrophage accumulation, and cell proliferation— all of which are required for hypertrophy after synergist ablation. These results show that COX-2 activity is required for skeletal muscle hypertrophy.[4]

So stay away from these drugs— in the short run, they may help you feel less pain; but in the long run, you'll impair your muscle's ability to grow.

Follistatin

Follistatin (FS) is a glycoprotein found throughout the body. Exciting research shows its potential for promoting muscle hypertrophy.[5] FS inhibits several members of the TGF-beta superfamily, including myostatin (Mstn), a negative regulator of muscle growth. A recent study looked at the mechanisms of FS-induced muscle hypertrophy. To test the role of satellite cells and the effect of FS, scientists used irradiation to destroy their proliferation capacity of endogenous satellite cells. And no surprise, FS overexpression increased the muscle weight by about 37 percent in control animals, while the increase reached only 20 percent in irradiated muscle— supporting the role of cell proliferation in the FS-induced hypertrophy. Thus, both satellite cell proliferation and inhibition of myostatin are involved in the FS-induced muscle hypertrophy.[6] Be on the lookout for new cool science on follistatin. ■

Jose Antonio, Ph.D., is vice president of the National Strength and Conditioning Association. He has a Ph.D. in muscle physiology and is chief executive of the International Society of Sports Nutrition.

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AskTheDoc

By Victor Prisk, M.D.



Someone told me that because I am a bodybuilder, I must have body dysmorphic disorder. Is that true?

Although there is a lot of psychopathology in the bodybuilding world that each of us share a little bit of, it is not true that all bodybuilders have body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). Although I am a physician and I learned a good bit of behavioral science and psychiatry in medical school, this is not my specialty. I have a lot of friends in a variety of different specialties. I have an extra-special friend in Dr. Kristina Curci, M.D. She is a national-level figure competitor who won the overall at the NPC Mid-Atlantic Grand Prix in 2008. She is also a specialist in psychosomatic medicine. Here is what she had to say about this topic:

VP: Dr. Kris, what is this term, 'BDD?'

KC: BDD is classified as a somatoform disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV-TR); the 'bible,' so to speak, for psychiatry. It is defined as a preoccupation of with an imagined defect or the exaggerated distortion of an existing minor defect in physical appearance.

For example: a small bump on the bridge of the nose is perceived as a deformity that must be corrected or camouflaged. The preoccupation must cause the individual distress and impairment in everyday living. Such as lost of friendships, employment and compromises to the individual's health and general well-being.

The condition was first described over 100 years ago and called by many names: 'obsessive physical neurosis' and 'dysmorphobia.' Suggesting the problem is an obsessive-compulsive drive or an actual phobia of the body. Nonetheless, the disorder went unrecognized in the American mental health literature until the 1980s. More recently, the condition BDD and a described subtype called muscle dysmorphia (MDM) have been noted in the medical literature and bodybuilding publications.

VP: That is very interesting. Do all bodybuilders have MDM?

KC: Not necessarily Victor. Let me explain. Muscle dysmorphia is the *pathological* preoccupation of muscularity. Sometimes the condition is referred to as reverse anorexia nervosa, or 'bigorexia.' This usually



encompasses the symmetry of whole-body muscularity, but may also be the misperception that a particular part of the body is smaller or less muscular— 'puny' chest, calves or biceps, for example.

The prevalence of MDM among bodybuilders is unknown; however, it is more commonly seen in men. Signs of MDM include excessive weight training despite known signs of injuries (i.e., painful tendonitis), frequent injuries such as tendon, ligament, and muscle tears, and excessive surgery or alterations to change the defect. MDM sufferers often have non-muscle BDD issues, most commonly related to hair and skin.

VP: It sounds like people with this disorder will have a greater propensity to overtrain and have injuries that I may need to address. Are there other issues to worry about if this goes undiagnosed?

KC: Substance abuse and depression are commonly-associated problems with MDM. Among the BDD types, MDM may have the highest rate of suicidal behavior. MDM is believed to onset in adolescence the same as non-muscular BDD. The earlier it is recognized and addressed, the better.

VP: Is there anything you can tell MD readers that will help them determine if their friends, family, or they themselves have MDM/BDD?

KC: Here are a few questions to help screen for MDM:

1. How often do you train, despite other obligations?
2. How often do you check or spend time on your appearance daily?
3. How often are you distressed by your appearance?
4. How often has your training caused problems in your relationships and family life?

It is often difficult for the affected individual to determine if MDM is truly disruptive to their daily life. Thus, it helps to have an objective perspective from a counselor or psychiatrist if there is any doubt.

VP: If you find that you have this problem, how is it treated?

KC: Treatment can involve individual or group therapy. This would include cognitive behavioral therapy. For severe cases of MDM, antidepressant therapy may be beneficial. Of course, if there are any signs of suicidal ideation, the patient should be emergently treated.

VP: That is very interesting. Thank you very much for your insight on this problem. Where do you see patients?

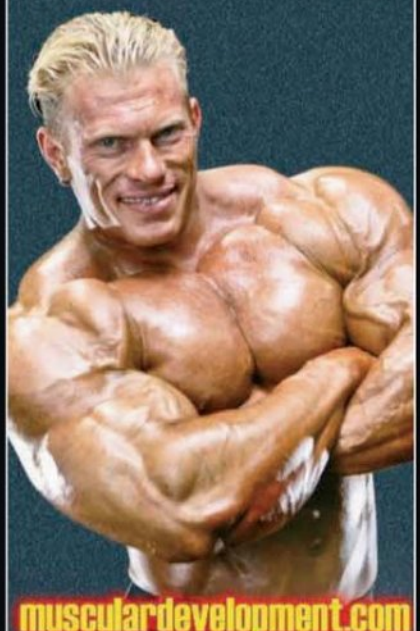


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AskTheDoc— Injury & Rehabilitation

KC: Thank you for having me. I practice at West Virginia University School of Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine.

My doctor wants to use some pig tissue to help reconstruct my tendon. Is that really possible?



This is becoming more common. Some might call it 'xenotransplantation' of tissue or a 'xenograft.' The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defines xenotransplantation as "any procedure that involves the transplantation, implantation, or infusion into a human recipient of either (a) live cells, tissues, or organs from a nonhuman animal source, or (b) human body fluids, cells, tissues, or organs that have had ex vivo contact with live nonhuman animal cells, tissues, or organs."

Some might remove the word "live" from this definition because many of the tissues being used are not living tissue. An immune response can still be seen when these nonliving tissues are transplanted from a porcine (pig) source to human.

There are many commercially-available xenografts for orthopaedic procedures, and additional products are under development. Their applications include use for bone, cartilage, and tendon repair. These materials range from collagen components derived from bovine (cow) and porcine (pig) sources, to deproteinated bone that can be combined with various polymers, ceramics, and autogenous tissues.

Xenografts have a number of important benefits. Unlike human tissue, an ample supply of xenografts is available. In addition, they are easy to use, and provide potentially-favorable clinical performance, although more data is needed. Xenografts have the potential to be grown and be harvested to fit specific needs of patients (such as in the picture of this mouse). They are being used to reconstruct heart valves!

However, the risk of disease transmission— bacteria, viruses, and prions— may be of greatest potential concern. Prions, such as those that cause Mad Cow Disease, are infectious agents composed only of protein and can be associated with bovine-derived tissues. There is no current data to suggest that any prion transmission has occurred in orthopaedic xenografts.

Another group of infectious diseases is *zoonoses*. These are diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. Research has shown that zoonoses are theoretically possible even in xenografts that have had all of their cells removed. Also, there may be a risk of transformation of various animal diseases— that are nonpathogenic to humans— into infectious agents and thus, new pathogenic entities. FDA oversight and post-market surveillance will be key for these products.

What's Up with Dr. Prisk?

Just trying to enjoy the last days of summer, and really looking forward to the Mr. Olympia contest. I think that this will be by far the best Mr. O in the last five years! As long as everyone stays healthy, this should be a crowd pleaser.

It is my belief that this title is completely up in the air. With the hungry **Kai Greene** making constant improvements and **Phil Heath's** inevitable surprises in his evolving physique, I think we may be having a change of the guard at the top of the hill. That being said, **Jay** and **Dexter** are a couple of pretty big wolves on the top of that hill— and when they want their food, it's there! (Nothing like quoting Arnold.) ■



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DR. VICTOR PRISK

Extreme Muscle Enhancement



By Carlon M. Colker, M.D. FACN

Olympia Evolution and De-Evolution

No bullshit, we all know the 2008 Mr. Olympia sucked, plain and simple. It sucked for a number of reasons that I indicated last year, including but not limited to the fact that there was no more Ronnie Coleman (he had retired), Victor Martinez skipped it (he was out with a knee injury), and Kai Greene wasn't ready. As a result, a full but smooth-looking (for him, anyway) Dexter Jackson was crowned the 2008 Mr. Olympia.

Prior to Dex winning, it was all about Jay Cutler with a first controversial Olympia win over 'Big Ronnie' in 2006, followed by a total rip-off win over Victor Martinez in 2007. As a longtime columnist and lover of the sport of bodybuilding, I hated to report how disappointed I was, but that's the truth. As if that wasn't bad enough, those wins were followed a lackluster, albeit justified, win by reigning champion Dex. These past few years were the *penultimate* stage of the sport I hold so dear, with wins that represented and continue to represent a 'de-evolution' of the sport.

These trends are quite understandable because as we stretch the limits of what is humanly possible, one must expect plateaus and regressions in the journey— but that still doesn't make it any easier to witness as a fan. People want to see a freak show. It is human nature to want to see the world's fattest lady, the infamous 'lobster boy,' the bearded lady, the man whose arms exploded (had to include my boy Tino), and of course the hilarious rip-off, 'man-eating chicken' (you find out after you pay that it's just a guy sitting there wolfing down a bucket of wings).

What we have come to expect in our sport is that each subsequent year outpaces the previous one in terms of mass or cuts— or both. We just want our jaws to drop.

Juiced to the gills or not, fans want to see the freaks, and the ultimate freaks in bodybuilding are supposed to come out and show themselves at the Mr. O. Right or wrong, good or bad, nice or mean, progressive or regressive as a society, the fact remains that this is our societal voyeuristic nature that is simply irrepressible.

What we have come to expect in our sport is that each subsequent year outpaces the previous one in terms of mass or cuts— or both. We just want our jaws to drop. We want to walk away saying, "Holy shit! Did you see that?!" When the competition answers the bell and delivers evolution, there's nothing like it. These are the best Mr. Olympia memories. But when the competition sucks and the guys don't deliver, it leaves us disappointed at the 'de-evolution.'

Here's a rundown of all previous Mr. Olympias and how their wins fit into this scheme:

Larry Scott (1965-1966): EVOLUTION— Prior to Larry, there was no Mr. Olympia competition, so clearly his 'inaugural' win in 1965 must be considered evolutionary. Having improved his physique the following year with a bit better definition and legs, 1966 was also an evolutionary year.

Sergio Oliva (1967-1969): EVOLUTION— Sergio represented a major evolution in the sport. Though like Larry he always struggled with cuts, Sergio displayed a level of freaky mass and completeness that could be competitive even on today's stage. Each year he won, he was able to bring his physique to new heights, leaving the competition and fans awestruck.

Arnold Schwarzenegger (1970-1975): EVOLUTION— Surreal that it seems bodybuilding didn't even exist until Arnold came on the scene. In 1970 he came on the Olympia stage and displayed a fantastic physique with mass, completeness, and the best cuts we had seen to date. And he brought the sport shape, symmetry, proportions, posing, and a mind-blowing Hollywood charisma. The combination was unbeatable for this five-year reign, which saw him improve every year.

Franco Columbu (1976): DE-EVOLUTION— Though his win was deserving given the field and his comparative condition, watching the diminutive Franco grab a title— in the wake of Arnold's exquisite dominance and subsequent temporary retirement— was as pathetic as watching Billy Crystal exploit his fame, fortune, and influence to convince Joe Torre to let him squeeze into to Yankee pinstripes and wiggle in the lineup for a single preseason at-bat (a strikeout, no less). Apart from the freaky cuts across his pecs and his crazy lat spread, Franco was absolutely nothing to look at.

Frank Zane (1977-1979): EVOLUTION— Though lacking the mass of past champions, Zane opened the eyes of Arnold and an entire legion of bodybuilding fans with his awesome display of razor-sharp cuts, perfect proportions, flawless symmetry, and striking poses. His domination and progressive physique improvement lasted for three years, and culminated in a total frame shift of the bodybuilding standard. We found out that refinement can beat mass, and if mass were to dominate again, it had to be a display of quality.

Arnold Schwarzenegger (1980): DE-EVOLUTION— Though 'The Oak' is legendary, I view his return victory in 1980 as de-evolutionary for the sport. His win was fueled by the controversy of a fix in that he had a movie coming out, and only started training and dieting for the show in a last-minute bid. Whether he deserved to win is up for grabs, but in the end, the physique he displayed was a disappointing de-evolution of physique development.

Franco Columbu (1981): DE-EVOLUTION— Like an odiferous flatulence, Franco seems to perpetually linger after Arnold has done his thing. So it's no surprise here that he stuck around in 1981, grabbing one more for the mantle. His build simply sucked that year. After breaking his leg running with a refrigerator on his back in a World's Strongest Man competition, he was on the mend. Unfortunately, his legs showed it and looked terrible. It was a year that saw Tom Platz in third position (a guy whom many felt should have won the show). Even so, here was Franco grabbing another Mr. Olympia for his mantle and once again, offering proof positive that even a broken clock is right twice a day.

Chris Dickerson (1982): DE-EVOLUTION— Chris Dickerson finally snuck in for a Mr. Olympia win, but his build was lackluster when compared to past standards. Though his quads and calves were terrific, his arms were horrible. So the drought continued for a third year, as fans really started to become uninterested in the sport.

Samir Bannout (1983): DE-EVOLUTION— Though I loved the 'Lebanese Lion's' nice combination of mass and symmetry, he simply wasn't the total package and certainly displayed nothing jaw-dropping. So the drought continued for a fourth year, and fans continued their exodus from the sport.

We want to walk away saying, "Holy shit! Did you see that?!" When the competition answers the bell and delivers evolution, there's nothing like it. These are the best Mr. Olympia memories.

Lee Haney (1984-1991): EVOLUTION— With 'Big Lee' on the scene, the drought was finally over! Here was a real freak. He was ushering in a dynasty that had never been seen previously. Lee had a shoulder-to-waist ratio (drop) that made his already-freaky mass look that much more inspiring. His combination of mass, shreds, and shape represented a new standard in bodybuilding.

Lost for three years with no clear direction, Haney pointed the compass again for us and allowed the sport to get back on course in the evolutionary direction. Each successive year he got better and better, with the most competitive excitement and epic rivalries. As a result, Haney brought the rest of the field up a whole notch as they strived to catch him.

It was the Golden Age of competitive bodybuilding, when we saw the spectacular physiques of the likes of Rich Gaspari, Lee Labrada, Mohamed Makkaway, and Albert Beckles all vying for the title. The Mr. Olympia had never before seen such an impressive depth of quality competitors. These were truly the glory days for competitors and fans alike.

Dorian Yates (1992-1997): DE-EVOLUTION— I know my labeling Dorian's reign as de-evolutionary might be called crazy by some, but I don't see it that way. Admittedly it's a tough call, because Dorian was so huge and ripped, but honestly, the query is one of *evolution* in the sport. The truth is that Doran had been chasing Lee for years, and never managed to better him, head-to-head. Finally Lee retired, and that gave Dorian the room he needed to grab the Olympia. As such, to me, his reign simply cannot be considered evolutionary for the sport of bodybuilding over what came before.

Ronnie Coleman (1998-2005): EVOLUTION— Ronnie Coleman reset the bodybuilding standard like no other competitor before him. At a shredded contest weight of nearly 300 pounds, he literally dwarfed the competition. Though he lacked a bit of width across the shoulders and his calves needed to be bigger, he was simply so unbelievably massive and ripped that these nit-picking criticisms were all but drowned out by the tsunami of freakish muscle mounds and cuts that he blew us all over with.

Jay Cutler (2006-2007): DE-EVOLUTION— Jay snuck in there for a win in 2006 simply because Ronnie looked like shit compared to how he usually showed up. In his bid for a ninth title, somehow Ronnie screwed up in preparation and it let Jay slip through. Make no mistake about it that Jay's win, while perhaps justifiable that night, did not happen because he displayed a physique that took the sport to the next level. If Ronnie was on target that night (even looking no better than he did in 2005,) he would have crushed Jay. But because Ronnie was off the mark, Jay slipped in for a win. He also hung on for another year for yet another controversial win, this time against Victor Martinez. Again in 2007 the physique he displayed was lackluster, far from representing

evoltion in our sport.

Dexter Jackson (2008): DE-EVOLUTION— Interestingly, when Dex finally squeezed in for a win last year, he was not at his best. He's certainly been much more cut in the past, but it was his night. Simply put, no one better showed up. But looking back, the fact remains that the mass and cuts he displayed that night would have been a pathetic display if compared to Ronnie Coleman at his best. In fact, even Yates would have dwarfed him on size and crushed him on cuts. So without a doubt in my mind, last year was a continuation of the sports de-evolution.

Kai and Dennis to the Rescue

So where does that leave us in 2009? Will the de-evolution of bodybuilding continue? Is there any hope on the horizon? Perhaps there is. But the hope does not come in the form of Dex or Jay, either of whom could sneak in for yet another de-evolutionary Mr. Olympia win.

The evolutionary hope comes in the form of two competitors who have all the potential in the world to get our sport back on track and take us to the next level. The first and perhaps most promising is **Kai Greene**. He reminds me a lot of Ronnie in that, though he has some glaring flaws in his physique, he's got so much clunky, knobby mass and freaky, deep cuts (especially in his quads) that he's a prime evolutionary candidate— if he can get his body dialed in. The key for him will be to figure out his physique and pile on slabs of muscle the way Ronnie and Dorian did to simply overwhelm their flaws. He honestly needs about another 15-20 pounds of quality beef over last year— a tall order, but it's been done before.

Fans want to see the freaks, and the ultimate freaks in bodybuilding are supposed to come out and show themselves at the Mr. O.

The other bright spot is **Dennis Wolf**. He has remarkable shoulders plus great quads and hams, with size and sweep to match. He's also got youth on his side. Assuming he has not yet maxed-out his physique development, he should have plenty of room to grow. He's got a freakishly small waist, but needs to pile on some back mass and get his arms a little bigger and harder. Like Kai, the true test of evolution will be to see if he can throw on about 15-20 more pounds of shredded mass from the last time we saw him.

Remember guys, our sport was, and is, and will always be called bodyBUILDING! ■

Dr. Colker's book, Extreme Muscle Enhancement: Bodybuilding's Most Powerful Techniques, *is available by calling `1-800-310-1555 or ordering the book online at www.prosource.net.*

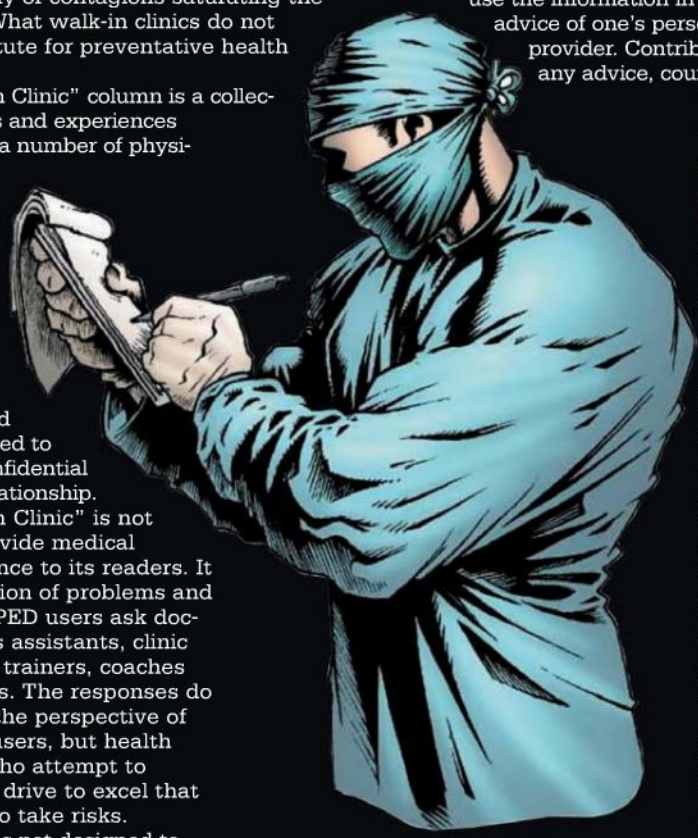


By Doctor X

MD Walk-In Clinic

Walk-in clinics offer convenience and occasionally good medical advice, assuming you survive the aerosolized spray of contagions saturating the waiting room. What walk-in clinics do not offer is a substitute for preventative health or primary care.

This "Walk-In Clinic" column is a collection of questions and experiences encountered by a number of physicians who have treated bodybuilders, athletes and gym rats using performance-enhancing drugs (PED). Any identifying information has been deleted and details generalized to maintain the confidential nature of the relationship.



The "Walk-In Clinic" is not designed to provide medical advice or guidance to its readers. It is a representation of problems and questions that PED users ask doctors, physician's assistants, clinic nurses, athletic trainers, coaches and pharmacists. The responses do not come from the perspective of hardcore drug users, but health professionals who attempt to understand the drive to excel that causes people to take risks.

This column is not designed to and does not provide medical advice, professional diagnosis, opinion, treatment or services to any individual. It provides general information for educational purposes only. The information provided in this column is not a substitute for medical or professional care, and readers should not use the information in place of a visit, call consultation or the advice of one's personal physician or other health care provider. Contributors are not liable or responsible for any advice, course of treatment, diagnosis or any other information, services or product obtained through this column.

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This is going to sound like a dumb question, but is there any muscle in the brain? When I started college, I knew I wasn't going to be playing sports at that level, so have been doing two to three cycles a year during college. I have noticed that when I am on, my grades are better and classes seem easier. Off-cycle, I struggle some, not failing but it seems like I have to read notes several times before they sink in and I don't ask questions during class. It is more like I am sitting there trying to keep up. What do you think?

Just about every professor fantasizes about strangling whoever first said, "There is no such thing as a dumb question." Seriously though, that is not as silly a question as it sounds, especially as you have associated an observed change associated with a behavior (anabolic steroid use).

Let's begin with the first question, is there any muscle in the brain? Yes and no. Inside the cranium (your skull) lies the brain. The brain is not just one type of cell, but a collection of cells that maintain and support the cognitive processing, emotional response, metabolic regulation, and other analytic functions. There is no flexing muscle in the brain. There is no reason for muscle, as there are no bony joints and the primary function of skeletal muscle is to move the skeleton.

One of the secondary functions of skeletal muscle, heat production, can actually be harmful to the brain. There is muscle in the blood vessels that controls the pressure of blood flowing through the arteries and capillaries of the brain. Blood flow needs to be regulated in the brain, as too high a pressure could cause bleeding, resulting in a hemorrhagic stroke. If pressure is too low, insufficient blood flow fails to provide sufficient oxygen and nutrient delivery, resulting in an ischemic stroke. However, there is little to suggest that anabolic steroids affect the function of the blood vessels in regulating blood pressure.

The changes you noticed reflect cognitive function and

emotional changes consistent with observations made with changes in testosterone levels in animal studies and human aging. Contrary to the opinion of ex-wives and newscasters, men do not think with their balls, but their thinking is influenced by concentrations of testosterone and other related steroids. Testosterone's effect on mental health and function has been more extensively studied relative to testosterone deficiency rather than as it relates to anabolic steroid use for muscle enhancement.

Researchers are compiling a body of evidence supporting the conclusion that low testosterone negatively affects certain components of memory and cognition. The association between low testosterone concentration and depression or other changes in mood is stronger. It is probable, especially if you do not use post-cycle therapy to restore natural testosterone production at the termination of a cycle, that you experience a period of low testosterone for a period of weeks to months until your body re-establishes its hormonal equilibrium.

Even if there is no mental enhancement that accompanies anabolic steroid use, it is possible that a user might experience some relative, even noticeable, decrease in mental alertness, mood, or function. Part of your experience in classroom participation may relate more to a decrease in aggression that you may have manifest in competing to answer questions or challenge the professors.

Now, the real (unanswered) question is, "Are you smarter on-cycle?" Sadly, this has not been studied. The few studies looking at adult men who are not experiencing age-related androgen deficiency/decline using supraphysiologic doses of testosterone have not measured changes in I.Q. or other measures of intellectual prowess. Certainly, being more confident (or aggressive) reflects in both your willingness to take a risk (answering a question) as well as your perception of your ability and rank among your classmates.

It is reasonable to hypothesize that anabolic steroids might have a similar performance-enhancement curve with cognitive function as they do with physical function. However, as has been demonstrated in experiences of bodybuilders and other users, the benefits reach a point of diminishing returns and negative side effects begin to occur, increasing in frequency and severity.

If anabolic steroids might improve mental function, why would an excess cause a problem? Extreme elevations in testosterone and other neurosteroids can cause irritability, sleep disturbance, impulsiveness, agitation, etc. Certain adjunct drugs also affect other neurosteroids (brain hormones not related directly to testosterone) resulting in changes in mood. 5-alpha reductase inhibitors, such as finasteride, affect not only DHT levels (the testosterone metabolite that impacts hair loss and prostate growth), but also other steroids that may lead to reduced libido, depression, etc.

The short answer to your larger question is anabolic steroids (particularly testosterone) may improve academic function, if blood concentrations are maintained at the upper part of the normal physiologic range or even at supraphysiologic concentrations, but the possibility for side effects that might eventually impair intelligence, analysis, focus, interaction, etc., certainly escalate as the dose extends beyond the normal physiologic range or as non-testosterone anabolic steroids are used; the presence of adjunct drugs such as aromatase inhibitors or 5-alpha reductase inhibitors confound the potential problems even further. Anabolic steroid users who experience rapid decreases in androgen concentration post-cycle, or experience periods of suppressed testosterone production off-cycle likely will suffer mental, emotional and cognitive changes that might negatively impact the same measures.

Nature causes species and individuals to compete with each other to achieve superiority in the food chain or social structure. In adaptive terms, it makes sense that elevations in testosterone (within the penumbra of the normal range), such as occurs during competition, would be associated with improved performance.

My doctor prescribed Viagra for the obvious reason. *[Viagra is prescribed to treat problems achieving erections.]* I overheard some of the local buff-boys talking about taking Viagra right before a workout and getting better pumps. Are they talking about muscle pumps or did I misinterpret what I heard? Can Viagra improve my workouts and is it safe to do that?



Viagra is the best known of a class of drugs called phosphodiesterase inhibitors. These types of drugs are used to treat erectile dysfunction and pulmonary artery hypertension (high blood pressure in the arteries that feed the lungs). Once an unmentionable problem, impotence apparently is prevalent enough to have launched Viagra as one of the best-selling drugs. Since its introduction, competing products have entered the market, reducing sales, but the demand for erectile dysfunction treatment maintains its sales at a healthy level.

Phosphodiesterase inhibitors of this class prolong the messenger signal that causes blood vessels to dilate after being stimulated by nitric oxide (NO). Most recreational and competitive athletes are familiar with NO, due to the proliferation of supplements claiming to increase the 'pump' during workouts by releasing NO. NO is generated in endothelial (lining) cells of the blood vessel,

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and stimulates receptors on the smooth muscle that regulate the degree of constriction or dilation of arteries and arterioles which cause the blood vessel to relax. The relaxation of the vascular smooth muscle results in a more 'open' blood vessel, increasing blood flow and delivery of oxygen and nutrients.

It sounds good, but there is a problem with the concept of using Viagra (or the related drugs Cialis and Levitra) to improve blood flow during or following exercise. These drugs are relatively specific, in that they block the breakdown of phosphodiesterase type V, a form of the enzyme that is found in the blood vessels of the penis and lungs. Why those two tissues share this specific enzyme is unknown. Most other blood vessels rely upon phosphodiesterase type III. One reason that Viagra and similar drugs were approved for the use of erectile dysfunction is that they have little effect on arteries that feed the heart or most of the peripheral circulation.

Drugs that affect phosphodiesterase type III lower blood pressure and increase blood flow to the heart. However, as blood vessels dilate throughout the body, blood pressure can drop dramatically. It is estimated that 12 percent of patients given type III phosphodiesterase inhibitors experience dangerous heart rhythm changes; headaches and other side effects are even more common.

Type V phosphodiesterase inhibitors do not have as significant an effect on peripheral vasodilation. That being said, there is likely some overlap of effect. NO donors, such as arginine, have an additive effect on vasodilation, when given along with Viagra-like drugs; an even more significant effect is seen when given with type III phosphodiesterase inhibitors.

One might wonder why men taking Viagra prior to going to the gym do not experience erections during a workout.

What does all this mean? Does Viagra increase pumps during a workout? It is not likely. Does taking Viagra make anabolic steroids, protein, carbohydrates, creatine, etc., more available to muscle post-workout? Again, not likely. A type III phosphodiesterase inhibitor has more substantiation behind such claims, but would have a much greater risk of side effects, even death by causing an irregular heartbeat. A recent conference in England on sports doping discussed the dangers of using nitrites or phosphodiesterase inhibitors during exercise.

Why do people take Viagra during exercise or post-exercise, then? It could have a small, even noticeable effect. It could be placebo effect (wishful thinking). It could be a reflection of the willingness of certain individuals to take risks or keep up with the competition.

One might wonder why men taking Viagra prior to going to the gym do not experience erections during a workout. Thankfully, Viagra does not appear to cause spontaneous erections with any great frequency; rather it requires some stimulation.

Now, another class of athlete may see some benefit with taking Viagra prior to exercise/competition. Endurance athletes depend upon rapid oxygen delivery from the lungs to the exercising muscles. Obviously, dilating the arteries of the lungs would assist in that purpose. However, studies suggest that this benefit is only significant when athletes are exercising or competing at altitude. It would be interesting to see if NFL teams provide Viagra to players prior to playing the Broncos in Denver. Many use supplemental oxygen on the sidelines. One presenter at the conference in England noted that declared use of Viagra by Olympic athletes more than doubled in the months leading up to the Olympic Games.

This is an interesting trend in the gym and it will be interesting to see the results of a controlled study both in strength athletes and endurance athletes. Hopefully, one will be published soon. ■

Busted! Legal Q&A

By Rick Collins, JD



BUSTED BYTES 2009

Here are some short answers to some of the recent questions I've gotten. Keep those questions coming to questions@cmgesq.com!

Q: Do you expect fallout from that anti-supplement article in the recent issue of *Sports Illustrated*?

A: Yes, especially combined with the recent Government Accountability Office report urging more oversight of the industry. Six Democratic House members have introduced HR 2749, the Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009 (FSEA). It seems designed both to address food contamination issues and also to place higher watchdog surveillance over the dietary supplement market. The bill would boost the statutory imprisonment penalties even for technical or administrative FDA violations from three years to 10 years. Even failing to follow proper labeling or GMP protocols could result in a supplement product being deemed "adulterated" or "misbranded"— and the responsible individuals going to prison. The bill would also permit FDA to conduct warrantless records searches of vitamin companies.

We all want to be safe from salmonella in food and from tainted sports nutrition supplements, but the bill may go too far. Critics have started a grassroots opposition movement. The final version of the bill may be softened, but my D.C. lobbyist contacts tell me there'll likely be other bills soon to come, as well as regulatory initiatives from Washington cracking down on the supplement industry. Hopefully, consumers will be protected but not deprived, and conscientious companies will withstand the increased heat while the bad apples are weeded out. Time will tell.

Q: Did the FDA just announce that Tylenol is too dangerous to sell over-the-counter?

A: No, but an FDA joint advisory committee issued recommendations citing safety concerns raised by its active ingredient, acetaminophen. Linked to increasing cases of acute liver failure and deaths, acetaminophen is linked to an estimated 110,000 emergency room visits per year, according to an FDA memo. The panel recommended lowering the maximum daily dosage, making the current maximum single dose of 1,000 milligrams available only by prescription (the new maximum single over-the-counter dose would be 650 mgs), strengthening the labeling, and removing the ingredient from some prescription drugs.

Those of you who read my book *Legal Muscle* will recall that I noted the problems associated with over-the-counter acetaminophen more than seven years ago (in the context of contrasting the high prevalence of reported acetaminophen injuries and deaths to the comparably few from anabolic steroids).

I've always maintained that more should be done to fully educate and warn the public about acetaminophen's risks. But making higher doses of Tylenol into prescription drugs is a plan with a variety of holes in it, with unfavorable implications for patients, insurers, and even taxpayers. At this point, FDA has not yet decided whether to act on the recommendations.

Q: Will you have a *Legal Muscle* booth at the Olympia this year?

A: No. The Olympia is an opportunity to meet in person with many of my supplement industry clients and IFBB friends, so being tied to a booth is too limiting. If you've never been to the "O" before, consider making last-minute plans to join us. After all, it's Vegas, baby, so anything can happen— didn't you see "The Hangover"? Anyway, I'll be in the expo at various times all weekend, along with Team *MD*, so *MD* peeps and all my Facebook friends (feel free to friend me up!) who see me should feel free to say hi and maybe give some feedback on my new men's fitness book, *Alpha Male Challenge* (available at bookstores everywhere and at alphamalechallenge.com). Your support means a lot!

This year's Olympia will be different for me personally, in that after the weekend I'll be heading directly from my comfortable hotel in Las Vegas to the Grand Canyon with my *Alpha Male Challenge* co-author James Villepigue and power guru David Sandler of the "Jesse James is a Dead Man" TV series. We'll be packing gear and sleeping bags, hiking to the bottom of the Canyon, camping overnight with the desert spiders, and then starting the 8-hour climb back out before dawn the next day. Look for the highlights soon on YouTube and at www.rickcollins.com! ■

Rick Collins, JD, CSCS [*www.rickcollins.com*] is the lawyer who members of the bodybuilding community and nutritional supplement industry turn to when they need legal help or representation. [© Rick Collins, 2009. All rights reserved. For informational purposes only, not to be construed as legal or medical advice.]

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WOMEN'S BODYBUILDING



By Cheri Owen, B.S., J.D.

ANXIOUS FOR VEGAS: The Ms. Olympia 2009

Each particular contest seems to take on the characteristics of its particular city. I find myself knowing my calendar by which contest I will be covering. Someone mentions March to me and I get anxious thinking about the Arnold Classic; I break out in a sweat, hoping I make it there on time, lest a late snow delays my flight out, or worse, strands me in Columbus. Yet, Columbus is a city that rallies with pride around its annual contest— the local crowds turn out in full force! Someone mentions September to me or invites me to a wedding, and my mind immediately tells me: "No, you can't! You have to cover the Atlantic City in New Jersey and the Team USA in New York. Or wait, is that the weekend of the Olympia? Damn, I can't go anywhere that weekend! I have to be on a plane to Vegas by that Wednesday!" An excited anxiousness starts to race through my system and my mind begins to remember 2008 in Las Vegas. I can help people remember their dates by knowing my own; my entire year turns in a circle, surrounded by the calendar of contests.

'Sin City,' oh yeah. The 24/7 city of lights, the *mine-is bigger-than-yours* kind of city, pumped full of oxygen in the air, to make you believe you're not tired— the themed hotels with their grandiose architecture— all of this and more confirms that Las Vegas is the proper venue to hold the annual Ms. Olympia. After all, come September 27 to 29, we will see some of the most beautifully-muscled physiques, each as symmetrical as all the east and west hotel wings on the strip. All that talent, together on one stage. Although the Ms. International is a prestigious event in and of itself, the Olympia is the oldest and arguably the most iconic bodybuilding event of all time. It's no wonder that the Olympia is held in



Dayana Cadeau | Betty Viana-Adkins | Lisa Aukland

PHOTOS BY PER BERNAL



glittering Las Vegas— there is no better city for such a glamorous competition!

Let's lay it out. Here are the women who already qualified for the 2009 Ms. Olympia: **Heather Armbrust**, **Lisa Aukland**, **Dayana Cadeau**, **Rosemary Jennings**, **Iris Kyle**, **Debi Laszewski**, **Cathy LeFrancois**, **Betty Pariso**, **Yaxeni Oriquen-Garcia**, **Isabelle Turell**, and **Betty Viana-Adkins**, with the qualifications of those at the PBW Championships. The only remaining show, where not one, but *three* women still have a chance to receive their qualification for the 2009 Ms. Olympia is the Atlantic City Championships, held September 11-12 and promoted by Ronald Goldstein and Stokely Palmer. You can be sure the competition at that Ms. Olympia qualifier will be intense.

Which means if I get anxious just thinking about the Olympia, and making sure I have my computer ready to go— what do you think the women of this year's Ms. Olympia are feeling? Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe they are such veteran competitors that they are cool as cucumbers, gracing the Ms. Olympia stage with their presence. Up in the Las Vegas lights they go— smooth sailing all the way. But, I have a feeling, that no matter how many years they have competed and how many times they have been up onstage, whether it be a rookie competitor like this year's **Isabelle Turell**, or the four-time Ms. Olympia **Iris Kyle**, seeking her fifth title— that there has to be some nervous tension going on there. Or, at least, to know they're human, for *our* sakes!

Who are we going to see in the top six this year? We all know that the women who qualify year after year are at the top of their game. And, yet, don't write anyone off: anyone can have an off-show. So far this year, we have seen Iris win the Ms. International, looking better than ever, with **Debi Laszewski** coming in second behind her, giving us one of her best shows ever.

At the New York Pro, we have seen **Cathy LeFrancois**, more refined and harder with her straight second win, and **Betty Pariso** right behind her, placing second, with **Jennings** taking third. Return Olympia competitors include **Betty Viana-Adkins**, who looked phenomenal and was hard as granite last year, and **Yaxeni Oriquen-Garcia**, a competitive veteran, who undoubtedly will show up as beautiful as ever, an absolute threat to everyone.

After winning the Atlantic City last year, **Lisa Aukland** came into the Ms. Olympia like an unexpected storm, taking fourth place— look for her to do damage as well this year. And watch out for **Dayana Cadeau**, taking second in 2006, 2007, and fifth place last year. Then there is Rookie **Isabelle Turell**, who placed a respectable seventh at the Ms. International this year, at only her second pro show. Such fierce competition is part of the fun: it is impossible to predict who will take first when the evening is over, and each woman must be *ON*, bringing her best— or risk not winning— or at the least not requalifying.

To be crowned Ms. Olympia is what every female competitor strives for. The Ms. Olympia can make a competitor into an overnight sensation, or in time, a legend.

I'm completely dry, just where I need to be. My lips stick together, so I suck on an ice cube. No water, no water yet. I was in the top two at prejudging, so I know I have a chance. You never know. I head backstage and I'm pumping up, trying to be cordial, but also keeping my eye on the prize. Everyone gets introduced and I do my routine. "Hurry up!" I think. "Let's get this party over with! I'm starving, I'm anxious and a bundle of nerves, man!" Then it happens. I'm up onstage at the 2009 Ms. Olympia, holding hands with Iris Kyle and ***Oh My God****! I won! I won! I can't believe it! I'm in shock— no words will come out.*

...Suddenly, I feel something wet. I wake up with my dog hovering over me, licking my face. And I remind myself— only in my dreams, baby... ■

KAI GREENE
The Predator

By Kai Greene

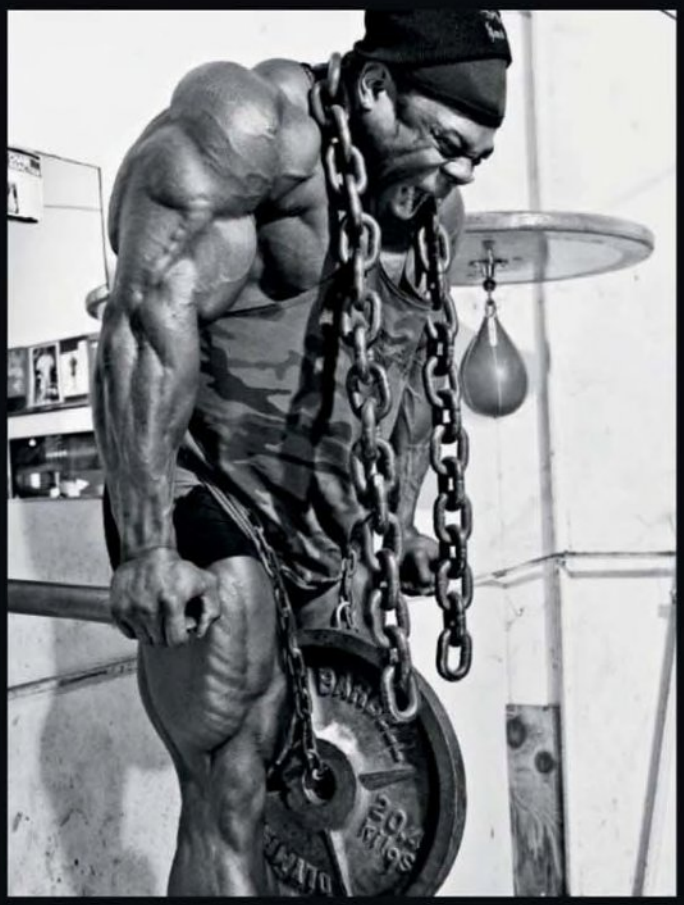
Life in My 'Hood: I Stay Low-key

Someone asked me the other day if I get a lot of attention walking around my neighborhood in Brooklyn, because I am larger than your average bear. To be honest, I am always totally covered up head to toe, even now in the summer, in an effort to play down my excessive size. Attention in my neighborhood is not necessarily a good thing. There are usually a group of young guys in front of my building, and the other day I came home to a bunch of police cars and a milling crowd. An ambulance had just taken one of the kids away after someone came up to him, started arguing, and shot him. So you can see why lying low and just keeping your head down can be the best course of action in a place like this, where disagreements often start over the most trivial things, like someone looking at someone else's girl, saying something that's construed as being disrespectful.

Sometimes young guys do approach me, because even in clothes it's hard to hide being 5'8" and over 300 pounds with the type of mass that goes along with those numbers. They will usually ask me, "How long you been down?" By this they are assuming I just got out of prison. Typically in this neighborhood if a guy is 'buffed,' he got that way lifting weights behind bars. "Never been down, I'm a pro bodybuilder," I respond, which usually gets a strange look.

I would never strut around in a tank top and shorts anyway, but if I did, there's no telling what type of reaction it could inspire. All it takes is one insecure knucklehead with a gun to be overwhelmed with jealousy, and that would be the end of little old me.





How many meals do you eat a day, in both off-season and contest prep? What do they consist of?

Here's an example of what I am eating now, which happens to be 10 weeks out from the Mr. Olympia:

Meal 1: 16 ounces steak, 12 egg whites, quart of white rice
Meal 2: 2 chicken breasts, turkey burger, pint of white rice
Meal 3: 16 ounces salmon, 6 egg whites, large green salad
Meal 4: 16 ounces steak, 2 sweet potatoes
Meal 5: 16 ounces salmon, 2 cups oatmeal with raisins, cup of corn
Meal 6: Shake: 85 grams protein, cup cashews or avocado
Meal 7: 16 ounces steak, 2 cups mixed vegetables

What training split do you follow?

I do a four-way split, and I take days off when I feel I need them. I may do all four days in a row and then take the fifth day off, or a rest day could go in there at any point.

Day one: Quads, hams, calves
Day two: Back
Day three: Chest and arms
Day four: Shoulders

Sometimes I will work chest by itself, and do arms with shoulders. It all depends on which area I feel needs more attention at a particular time.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

Respect the Women!

MD is starting to do a lot more coverage for women's bodybuilding, and that's a wonderful thing. But what I would really love to see change is the attitudes a lot of bodybuilding fans have toward the ladies. It really bothers me to see female bodybuilders treated with disrespect and disapproval, and in some cases even mocked and insulted. Women's bodybuilding is beautiful and a valuable part of our sport, and it's terrible to see people looking at it like a carnival sideshow.

The mid-to-late 1980s was a magical time in women's bodybuilding, with stars like Cory Everson, Anja Langer, the young Lenda Murray, Tonya Knight, Diana Dennis, and many more. These women were celebrated and appreciated, and you saw them on magazine covers almost as often as the men. Their contests were held on their own and sold out in large venues.

Has women's bodybuilding gone too far since then? That argument could be made. But rather than cast the whole sport aside, why not try and bring it back to new glory days? I would even love to see mixed pairs bodybuilding come back. With so many couples performance-based TV shows like "Dancing with the Stars" and "So You Think You Can Dance" doing very well in the ratings, I think the time is right. And of course, I would not rule out being part of it myself.

Special Thanks

As always, I want to acknowledge the people who help me be where I am today. First of all, I have to thank my mentor, Oscar Ardon, for all that he does. Thanks to Steve Blechman and Steve Weinberger, and of course Gerard Dente of Muscle Meds. I've been doing various appearances to promote the Muscle Meds product line, and I've had the opportunity to meet a lot of very cool people along the way.

Even though it's been half a year now since I was out in Los Angeles, I want to thank a couple people out there who were always incredibly nice to me, positive and encouraging, and generous with their time. They are Dean Tornabene, former pro bodybuilder and successful entrepreneur, and Paul Finn, who works with many of the clients of Mr. Charles Glass. Charles also has my utmost respect and appreciation for the time we trained together.

Finally, I want to send a special shout-out, prayer, and moment of silence, for the late Eridania Rodriguez, older sister of Victor Martinez. I would like to send all my positive energy out to that entire family during this difficult time. As for the rest of us, we all need to take a minute and ponder the gift of life that we all have each day— and never once take it for granted.



My Favorite Back Exercise— And You Don't Even Need Weights!

Right now I am in love with pull-ups. Mastering pull-ups is one of the most challenging things a bodybuilder can do, but also the most rewarding. The vast majority of people who even attempt pull-ups (since many simply do lat-pulldowns instead) don't use a full range of motion. They don't get a full stretch and a full contraction, activating every last fiber of the lats.

There are few things you will ever do for your back that will be as productive as three or four good sets of pull-ups. Being that I weigh 315 pounds at the moment, there is no need to add any weight in my case. Most people wouldn't need to add resistance, or be able to, for that matter, if they did their chins with absolute mastery.

Some of the guys who have motivated me over the last couple years were David Henry and Victor Martinez. Their form on pull-ups is impeccable, and you can see their backs working with maximum effort on every rep. It's no coincidence that they also happen to have excellent back development.

KAI GREENE—The Predator

Top Fan Letter of the Month!

Dear Mr. Greene: Just a quick e-mail to say THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!! I have never written a pro bodybuilder in all my years in the sport. This is my first. I'm a 43-year-old male who has followed the sport since childhood and started training officially in my mid-20s. I have had the privilege to follow your career since the first time I saw you in print. That was back when you were doing natural shows. You were incredible then, but now it's just mind-boggling! Congrats on all the obvious hard work and gut-wrenching sacrifices you've made! I always thought of you first as an artist, who happened to choose bodybuilding as his working art form. Like myself; however, not in your quality, Sir. I have had a chance to see some of your incredible artwork as well, posing included— it is fantastic! I wish MD would give us more insight into those aspects of your life.

However my "thank you" relates specifically to your video posting you did leading up to the Arnold Classic. You were on the treadmill, speaking about what bodybuilding meant to you. I must say without any apprehension whatsoever, those were the most incredibly honest and thought-provoking statements ever! It was hands down, the best thing I've EVER SEEN OR HEARD in more than 20 years of bodybuilding, and I was moved to tears from start to finish! The level of PASSION in your voice and eyes, wow! I've never seen that before from anyone. Yes, Arnold and everyone else included. No disrespect to 'The Oak' or anyone else. I'm a massive fan of ALL the boys. However I stand by my statement.



This was especially moving since I gave up training three years ago for many reasons, one being financial. Even being a drug-free bodybuilder who doesn't compete, I managed to get lost. I lost sight of my true passion and goals in training. I can't imagine how you did it for so long without proper funds! Finances was only part of the reason I lost my love. I got way too wrapped up on the finished product. I lost the joy of the journey. Hearing and seeing you describe what bodybuilding means to you in such incredible detail brought me back to my original mindset. This is what I was seeking to regenerate— to rekindle the fire and passion I had starting out, where the feelings were the main focus. Muscular development came second after the mental and spiritual benefits.

I have never been able to get anyone to clearly understand my passion for bodybuilding. Nor have I heard it described, as you have done so eloquently. To hear someone at your level talk of the motivation, desire and discipline so openly and honestly, not just saying it; to see it live in technicolor in your eyes like that, blew me away. Made a world of difference to me. I appreciate the candor and the honesty, so much. I don't feel so alone now. You are 1,000 percent correct Mr. Greene— it is way more than muscles, way more than just exercise, way more than just a lifestyle. It is a refuge; a comfort and spiritual journey. When used in the correct manner, it becomes so much more than the sum of its parts.

Having just returned to bodybuilding five months prior, seeing that video was exactly what I needed to help me with my primary goal: to return to my original motivations for training and to work within that mindset for as long as I train in this life. I've watched that video 20+ times. I've suggested it, as must-see MD viewing to everyone I know who bodybuilds for any reason.

I know you said in the video "if I was out there living my best life then I probably wouldn't be watching the video." LOL!! Some of us take the time to educate ourselves to help us find the proper direction to our "best lives." I do get your point, though. I think it was directed to a certain type of "bodybuilding enthusiast." I don't think it wasn't a literal statement. At least I think I understand. LOL!

In closing, thank you again for all the inspiration and for the courage to say the things you do and to help us all to remember what true bodybuilding is. To apply ALL the gifts it gives in a positive way that benefits our whole lives. I vow today to start living my life, once again on my terms. To live 'my version' of the fullest life I'm capable.

Thank you so much for the inspiration and best of health and continued success now and in the future. I want you to know you are more than a bodybuilding champion to me. You are a true warrior of life, a philosophical and deep human being. I admire you as an incredible man, totally independent of athletics or financial achievements. Though I'm ecstatic for you! You deserve all of the blessings you're receiving now! Enjoy the fruits of your labors! You've earned it! No one can debate that fact. See you at the Olympia. GOOD LUCK!!!

Your Fan and Iron Brother for Life,
Irwin Dillon
Montreal, Quebec, Canada ■

Got a question for Kai Greene? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Kai personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, MD Spotlight, for Kick Ass Inc.

VICTOR MARTINEZ— The True Victor

By Victor Martinez







Hey Vic, you got any good ideas on how to help me with getting my lats to pop? I have so-so lats and can't really think of anything else to do to target them other than lat pulldowns and chins.

All you need to do is read MD every month, and you should have a pretty good idea of what it takes to make your back into a wide-ass slab of wing-meat. You basically need to hit the lats from different angles, and different grip-widths to stimulate all the fibers. It's a huge body part! I like chins, deadlifts, barbell rows, dumbbell rows, and some cable or machine work. Try this workout for a few months and I guarantee you'll see a difference:

Chins	4 x 10-12 (2 sets wide grip, 2 narrow)
Deadlifts	4 x 8-10
Barbell rows	3 x 10
One-arm dumbbell rows	3 x 10 each arm
Lat pulldowns	3 x 12 (use different grips and hand positions from week to week)
Cable or machine rows	3 x 12

I also need to make sure you know that with back training, it's all about feeling the lats work and getting good contractions. Going heavy won't do shit unless you're doing that. You're better off using less weight and making the lats work harder. I see fools throwing weight around all the time and they wonder why their backs suck. Don't get caught up in worrying about how you can do 150s for dumbbell rows or 315 on the barbell row. Unless you're doing it right, who cares? I'd rather have a great back all the time than impress the other knuckleheads at the gym for an hour a week.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL



I have read about how you stopped competing in bodybuilding for a while in your early 20s and trained more like a powerlifter for a couple years to put on mass. Do you think that's something a lot of bodybuilders in their early stage of training would be wise to do, as opposed to following more of a traditional bodybuilding program with lots of isolation movements?

It's a good idea because a lot of young guys these days jump right into doing a routine they read about that a top pro does, instead of learning the basics and building a foundation. Using a lot of machines and cables and doing tons of isolation movements is not how the pros built all their size in the first place. It's how most of them train once they have pretty much all the mass they need and now they want to refine it.

Powerlifting itself won't really put a lot of mass on you, but what it will do is help you get a lot stronger. Then, when you move on to more of a conventional bodybuilding type of routine, you'll be handling a lot more weight and you'll start growing fast.

One thing I have to strongly recommend is that if you're going to train like a powerlifter, find an experienced powerlifter to show you how to do all the lifts correctly. There is a lot of technique involved in the way they do squats, bench presses, and deadlifts, and you're not going to be able to figure it all out on your own. I was lucky because there were a few really good powerlifters at the gym when I wanted to get into it, and they helped me learn about proper body position, breathing, and more.

You could either take a long period, like six months to a year, and focus on powerlifting if you are a beginner and use it to build a base of pure strength, or use it for shorter periods like six to 10 weeks, once or twice a year, if you're a little more advanced but still want to get something beneficial out of it.

Do you think it matters whether you train after having eaten just one meal as opposed to two, three, or four? Some people think you will have better workouts if you have more meals in you— do you think it makes any difference?

I think it's best to have at least two meals eaten and digested before you train, especially if it's a big, demanding body part like legs or back. You need to have all that fuel on reserve so your tanks don't dry up in the middle of the workout. I used to train pretty late at night and by that point I had at least four or five meals down (I didn't say I woke up early— back then it was close to noon).

I've heard about how some guys train after just having a shake or something, but I don't think that's too smart. Liquid meals go right through you. I'd rather have a nice steak and a potato, or chicken, rice, and beans. Meat takes longer to digest, so it's like a natural time-release protein. I use the shakes too, of course— Probolic SR by MHP— but before a workout, I need a nice solid meal to give it my best effort.

Some nutritionists are very much against drinking protein shakes when dieting, and insist that you should eat all solid meals instead. Do you agree with this?

No, I don't. I usually have two shakes a day even when I diet. I have them as my first and last meals of the day. My morning shake is with oatmeal, and I will have a little natural peanut butter with the one I have before going to bed. I am still waiting for a real explanation about why you can't get as lean drinking shakes. I still think you need to have solid food as most of your meals and shouldn't live off shakes by any means, but I think it's silly to say you can't have any or else you won't get ripped.

In Memory of My Sister

As most of you know, my older sister Eridania was taken away from us in July. She left behind three children, and the only thing she ever wanted was for them all to have good educations and live happy lives. With that in mind, anyone who would like to make a donation can send it here in care of her youngest daughter and my niece, Yanaris, who is only 17 years old.

Yaniris Figueroa Tragedy Fund
P.O. Box 268
Carthage, TX 75633

Or if you would like to contribute to her education fund via wire transfer from your bank:
Routing 111923607
Account 5984602

Hot Time, Summer in the City

We were having some pretty cool weather this summer, but finally it's been heating up. I don't really have a problem training in hot weather except that I do tend to struggle more with my breathing. I read about how freaking hot it is in Metroflex Gym in Texas, and it brings back memories of my old days at Elmo's Gym. Elmo didn't believe in air conditioning, or probably he couldn't afford it for the place. That place used to be like a steam bath sometimes in the summer. I'm not a wimp, but personally I would rather be focused on the workout and not dripping in sweat and feeling like you could fry a damn egg on your skin.

Muscle Maker Grill is Open for Business!

At long last, my restaurant is open. Come by 725 River Road in Edgewater, New Jersey and you can be sure to find something healthy to eat that also tastes delicious. I'm already eating a lot of my meals there as I get ready for the Mr. Olympia!

Special Thanks

I have to extend a very big thank you to Gerard Dente for all his help and for believing in me over these last couple years. I know he's not really old enough, but he's almost become like a father figure to me! Thanks to my partner in Muscle Maker Grill, Ande Taylor. We did it! I'd like to thank my kids just for being such great kids, and I love them all.

And finally, to my sister: Iris, I know you're watching me. I promise to do my best in everything and make you proud of your little bro. ■

Got a question for Victor Martinez? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Victor personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, MD Spotlight, for Victor's Journal.



BRANDEN RAY

Road to the USAs

By Branden Ray



Pumped Up In Vegas

LAS VEGAS - The final week of prep for the USAs has been an amazing experience. Robbie Durand came to DC and shot my 'In the Trenches' video for my last workouts before leaving for Vegas. I was honestly anxious to see how you guys would embrace it, and the videos received very positive reviews. Robbie and I plan to shoot a lot more often. I am confident that my knowledge of training and love of sharing my methods and philosophy will help others achieve their goals.

As you may hear repeatedly in the video, I always say, "Leave the ego at the door." If you lift with an ego, you will not get results— but you increase the chances of injury. As Toney Freeman says, "Leave the gym with sore muscles and not with sore joints."

VPX is my sponsor and provided me with the craziest fat-burner on the market, Clenbeutrx! During my low-carb days, it really provided me with the energy that I needed, and trimmed the fat immediately. I would also like to thank Otomix and www.capitalmeats.com.

Most people train in running shoes because they are comfortable and yes, the do look pretty cool. A couple of years ago, I was squatting 545 in the rack while wearing a pair of running shoes. When I cleared the bar from the rack and stepped back, my ankle buckled and I collapsed. It was a good thing that the safety bars were on the side, or else I would've had an accident similar to Claude Giroux.



PHOTO BY PER BERNAL



I was rushed to the hospital and was told by my doctor that I was fortunate to only severely sprain my ankle, and he required me to only wear shoes that supported my ankle— and that was when I ordered my first pair of Otomix.

New Shoes, New Journey

A couple of weeks ago, Otomix got wind of the fact that I mostly train in their shoes, specifically on leg day. They even saw some pics from my photo shoots where I was sporting some of the high-top, flat-sole shoes and sent me a few items to bring with me to the USAs! So for now on you'll see me mostly in Otomix for my photo shoots. Thank you guys, for not only making cool products, but products that are highly functional!

Capital Meats is one of the top meat distributors in the DC Metro area. They provided me with a deep freezer and an unlimited amount of tilapia, chicken breast, and top sirloin burgers, which were the staple of my diet as I prepped for the USAs.

Having my food delivered to my doorstep was a huge weight lifted off of my shoulders when I was low on carbs and barely had the energy to train, do double cardio sessions, and work 10 hours a day. Not to mention the quality is so top-notch, especially when it came to the tilapia. A lot of tilapia that comes from China comes from extremely unsanitary conditions and can be dangerous to eat, especially in the amount that us bodybuilders consume. With Capital Meats, I trusted that the top quality of their meat was going to be an important factor in achieving my physique goals and winning my pro card.

I'm writing this on the eve of weigh-ins from my hotel room at the Embassy Suites. If one thinks that all you have to do is kick your feet up and wait, once you arrive for your show... wrong. I arrived on Tuesday and Hany and Jay Cutler made me do 30 minutes on the StepMill, 30 minutes on the treadmill, and then 20 minutes in the sauna. I wanted to puke!

When I woke up Wednesday morning, I looked like a completely different person! I went from being cut to being striated. I was able to shed so much water, a lot of which was picked up on my flight.

I'm excited to bring a new package to the stage, and just being in Vegas again pumps me up. This journey is coming to an end, and I strongly feel in my heart that a new one is about to begin. ■

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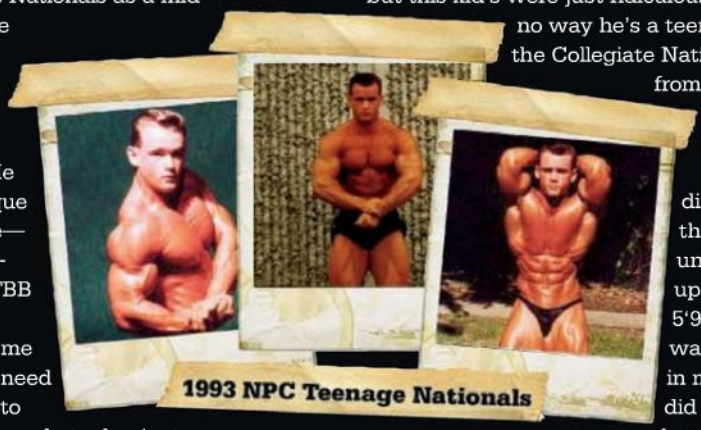
BRANCH WARREN—THE TEXAS TITAN

MASS with CLASS

By Branch Warren

The Day I Met Jay— 16 Years Ago!

Now that the Mr. Olympia is coming up soon, I'm starting to get a little nostalgic about my early days in the sport. The 1993 NPC Teenage Nationals was enormously significant to me. Just the year before at the age of 17, I had won the AAU Teenage Mr. America. Shortly afterward, I learned that the NPC was where I should be competing, so I did that year's Teenage Nationals as a middleweight. I didn't make the top five, but it was still a valuable experience.



1993 NPC Teenage Nationals

The kid who won my class and the Overall was named Matt McLaughlin. He had a very complete physique and was ripped to the bone— Matt actually won the light-heavyweight class at the IFBB North American just a year later. But seeing him made me realize, OK, that's how you need to look to win. I came back to the Teen Nationals in 1993, ready to dominate.

It was a tough show that year. Two future pros were in the middleweights, Capriese Murray and Rodney St. Cloud. Jeff Willet, who went on to win his pro card at Team Universe, was in my class; the light-heavyweights, as well as Julio Rivera. I had beaten Julio the year before at the AAU show and he was so angry about it that he somehow got my home phone number and used to call me up late at night to harass me and tell me I would never beat him again!

Backstage, I saw this huge blonde kid come in wearing a T. Micheal sweatshirt and those striped Hot Skins tights that were in style back in the day. His shoulders were wide as hell and those legs, damn! I had pretty big legs already, but this kid's were just ridiculous. I kept thinking, there's no way he's a teenager. He has to be doing the Collegiate Nationals. But this big S.O.B. from Massachusetts was a teenager, and you know his name— Jay Cutler.

I started to feel pretty discouraged about winning the Overall, as I had planned until I saw him start to pump up. Jay was almost 220 at 5'9" even back then, but he was pretty soft. I knew I was in much better condition. He did win the Heavyweights, but I won the Overall. That night was a turning point in my life. I decided I would become a professional bodybuilder, and I set some lofty goals for myself. Some of them I have achieved, and some I am still striving toward. But I can say that even though I had competed in a couple shows before then, the day I met Jay was really the day my bodybuilding career began.

My Best Chest Workout Ever

I remembered a chest workout from around '03 or '04, when Johnnie Jackson and Jay Moore were doing chest with me. It was one of those days where everything was just 'on.' You know what I mean. We started with bench and did our warm-up sets. At 405, Johnnie and Jay did like 8-10 reps each. I got under the bar and did 5 and it felt very good— so light that I didn't want to waste any more time with it. I thought to myself, "It's on, muthafuckers!" I said let's put another plate on. Johnny ground out 3 reps. Jay passed because of his bum shoulder. I did five plates for 7 reps and threw it on the rack— a new personal record.

We went on to incline bench and started with 315 for a few reps and then moved right on to 405. Johnnie and Jay did like 8-11 reps each. I went berserk and did 14. Not to be outdone (he's very competitive, just like me), Johnnie put quarters on to make it 455 and pushed up 4 reps. Jay did the same. I felt awesome and got 5. We went on to flat dumbbell presses and started with the 100s for 10, then did the 150s for 10.

For the last set, I grabbed the big old 200s and managed 7 reps. No one else got more than two. But it wasn't over yet. From there, it was weighted dips. We put anchor chains around our necks for weight. I don't know how much they weigh, but fuck it, who cares? At that point, it's amazing we could even do dips with bodyweight after all that heavy pressing. We each did three sets to failure, with the goal being to do more reps on each set than we had on the previous one.We ended the workout with three supersets back and forth between the peck deck and cable crossovers. I was so tight and pumped in the chest and shoulders that I literally couldn't get my shirt off when I got home. And that was probably the strongest chest workout I have ever had to date.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

Hey Branch, congrats on all your accomplishments to date and more to come in the future. Do you have any suggestions for back training with several herniated disks? I've already gone lighter and cut out unsupported rows of any kind. Hammer Strength machines seem to cause very little pain. Any other ideas?



Man, that type of injury sucks. One of my best friends has the same problem. My advice is just train around the injury. Find out what you are capable of doing and not. You can forget all about squats and bent-over rows. But there are many other exercises that you can do instead. Using supported rowing machines like the T-bar with the chest pad, plus all the Hammer machines, will all be effective without risking further injury.

Most of all, stay positive and don't get frustrated and give up. My friend went on to win several bodybuilding contests after his injury, whereas many others I have known with back injuries quit. Your attitude is what will make or break you.

As somebody who has been training for so many years, I'm guessing that from time to time you may have reached sticking points in size and/or strength. I was wondering what you would do or what you advise others to do when they reach such a sticking point. Some people say you should take a week or two off because you are probably overtrained. Another school of thought is to change your routine or back off the intensity for a few weeks. Sometimes it seems that when these sticking points are reached you seem to lose some strength if you try to just keep blasting through it with all-out intensity every workout. What are your thoughts on this subject?

What I have always done when I reached a sticking point was to take a week off and rest. Your body is trying to tell you it needs a break, and probably your mind, too. It's easy to get burnt out when you do this shit for years and years. Then when I started back training, I make sure to change up my exercises and the order in which I do them.

Your performance does drop whenever you plateau out, because your body isn't recovering fully. The only real solution is taking a break. This used to happen to me more frequently when I didn't compete as much. Now that I do 3-4 shows a year and rest after each show with a couple weeks off from training, I haven't had this problem anymore.



BRANCH WARREN—THE TEXAS TITAN



Training in Hell Probably Isn't This Bad!

July in Texas can be absolutely brutal when the heat and humidity get unbearable. I just trained back today at Metroflex with my buddy Matt Lehr, formerly with the New Orleans Saints and now a free agent. The thermometer read 106°, and you know this gym doesn't have air conditioning. Brian does have a couple big fans going, but all they do is blow the hot air around. I can't slack on my back training, so we got through a full 30 sets even though it took us a little over two hours. I don't recommend working out in this type of heat to anybody— but if you can hack it, consider yourself a true hardcore warrior!



Condolences to Victor Martinez

My heart goes out to Victor, whose sister was murdered this summer. I lost my dad last year, but it was under much different circumstances. I will be sure to keep him, his family, and his sister's family in my prayers. ■

Got a question for Branch Warren? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Branch personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, MD Staff and Pros, Q and A for Branch Warren.

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MARK ALVISI

MARK of a CHAMPION

By Mark Alvisi



Why do you do cardio in your off-season? Is it just for general health? Does it help keep your body fat percentage low? I'll be starting my first off-season soon and don't really want to do cardio. At the same time, I don't want to get past 10 or 11 percent body fat. I eat pretty clean and hardly ever cheat.

I believe that doing cardio even in the off-season helps you grow. It helps keep your metabolism elevated and also keeps your cardiovascular endurance strong so you can train harder and recover faster. You need to feed the muscles with good calories and burn the fat with intense training and cardio. It is also better to not let your body fat climb too high or you will have to work that much harder to burn it off later. You may very well lose muscle when leaning out if you have an excessive amount of body fat to shed. Keep in mind this is what works for my body. Some guys don't have to do cardio to stay pretty lean off-season— and we hate them for it!

I decided last year that I want to be buff and huge. I probably have about 17 percent body fat since I started trying to really make some good gains about a year ago. I definitely notice that my hips and butt got bigger. My waist is up from 34 to 38, my face is fine, but my chest is a bit flabby. Do I need to start cutting? How often should I do cardio? And how do you know how many carbs you need? What happens if you don't eat a lot of meals? Sorry for all the questions, but I am pretty new to all this stuff.

If you're holding a lot of body fat, that's not the kind of 'buff' or 'huge' you want, is it? You will actually look more muscular and impressive if you're leaner. If you really want to lean down, you should do cardio at least five times a week in the morning, on an empty stomach. It's hard for me to tell you how much cardio to do or how many carbs to eat, because I don't know what you're doing now or what your metabolism is like. Not eating enough meals is a bad idea. That will cause you to lose muscle and slow your metabolism down.

I do suggest you start trying to lose some fat before things get any worse. I have seen many guys who became obese because they stayed on an off-season bulking program for way too long, and didn't really notice that they were just getting fatter and fatter. If you can't see your abs at all, not even a vague outline in favorable lighting, you're carrying too much fat for a bodybuilder

You have some sick wheels, man! What leg exercises did you do when you were 18 like me, bro?

Thanks. When I was 18 I joined the Army, so I spent most mornings running many miles for PT training. We also spent a lot of time 'ruck marching' over various fields and hills. That's when you have a pack on your back that can weigh over 50 pounds, plus you're carrying gear and weapons. Some of our training missions covered miles of terrain— and very little of it was flat! Then in the gym I did mostly squats, leg presses, leg extensions and leg curls. My legs grew pretty slowly because they never had a chance to fully recover. Once I got out of the Army and didn't have to run every day, my legs grew much faster.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

NEW COLUMN!

The One Thing I Crave After the Show:

Ice cream is my Kryptonite. I could go for a big bowl of Oreo Cookie or anything with chocolate and peanut butter in it.

The 2009 Mr. Olympia—Good Luck, Judges!

I actually feel pretty bad for the judges who have to sort out the top guys this year at the Mr. Olympia. If you have **Dexter, Jay**, **Victor**, **Kai**, **Phil**, **Branch**, **Toney**, and **Wolf** all at their best, how are you really supposed to put them in order without causing a riot? You have at least six guys perfectly capable of winning the show, and they all have different physiques.

Heath isn't as big as someone like Kai or Jay, but he presents an illusion of matching them on size because of his tiny joints, full muscle bellies, and crazy condition. Wolf could be a real threat if he shows up looking like he did in 2007, with a little more back thickness. Kai— tons and tons of muscle, and he has things nobody else does. Jay could get his title back if he comes in really dry and stays full. Toney Freeman doesn't get a lot of love from the magazines lately, but he could also be right up there battling.

I guess it all comes down to what the judges lean toward, mass or aesthetics. But then you have someone like Victor, who falls right in the middle! This is a hard sport not only to be an athlete in, but also to officiate.

Thanks in Advance

A big crew from Level 5 Fitness and Conditioning, the gym I train at in Del Ray Beach in Florida, is coming to support me at the USA in Las Vegas. I want to thank everyone who is making the trip because I do appreciate it. Since this is my last entry before the USA, thanks also have to go out to Steve Blechman, Rich Gaspari, and Hany Rambod. I hope I make you all proud!



In the Home Stretch!

I write this exactly three weeks out from the USA Championships, which will be a done deal by the time you read this. Everyone has been asking me how I feel, because it's normal to be pretty tired by this point if you've done your homework and gotten extremely lean.

When I wake up and do my morning cardio, it's really tough. I'm depleted, and the only thing that gets me through is my desire to win. Oddly enough, I feel great during my actual workouts. In fact, it's the only time of day I seem to have a lot of energy.

And this may sound crazy, but I am as strong now as I have ever been! I am doing good reps with 365 in both the incline and flat barbell bench. I even did 405 for four reps the other day on the flat, but don't tell Hany— he would not be too pleased to hear it! I'm doing good reps in squats with 405, close-grip presses with 315, and EZ-bar curls with 165 in good form.

I have not lost any size or fullness, which is a first for me. Typically that happens in the last six to eight weeks. I'm 226 right now and I can't have more than another pound or two of fat to lose. My glutes were in at seven weeks out, but that's not really as impressive as it sounds because I have never held much fat there. You can even see blurry striations in my glutes in the off-season. But I am on track and right where I need to be. If you're reading this, you already know how it all turned out.



Do you drink a post-workout drink (not talking about protein shakes) and if you do, do you drink it before you do cardio or after you're finished working out completely?

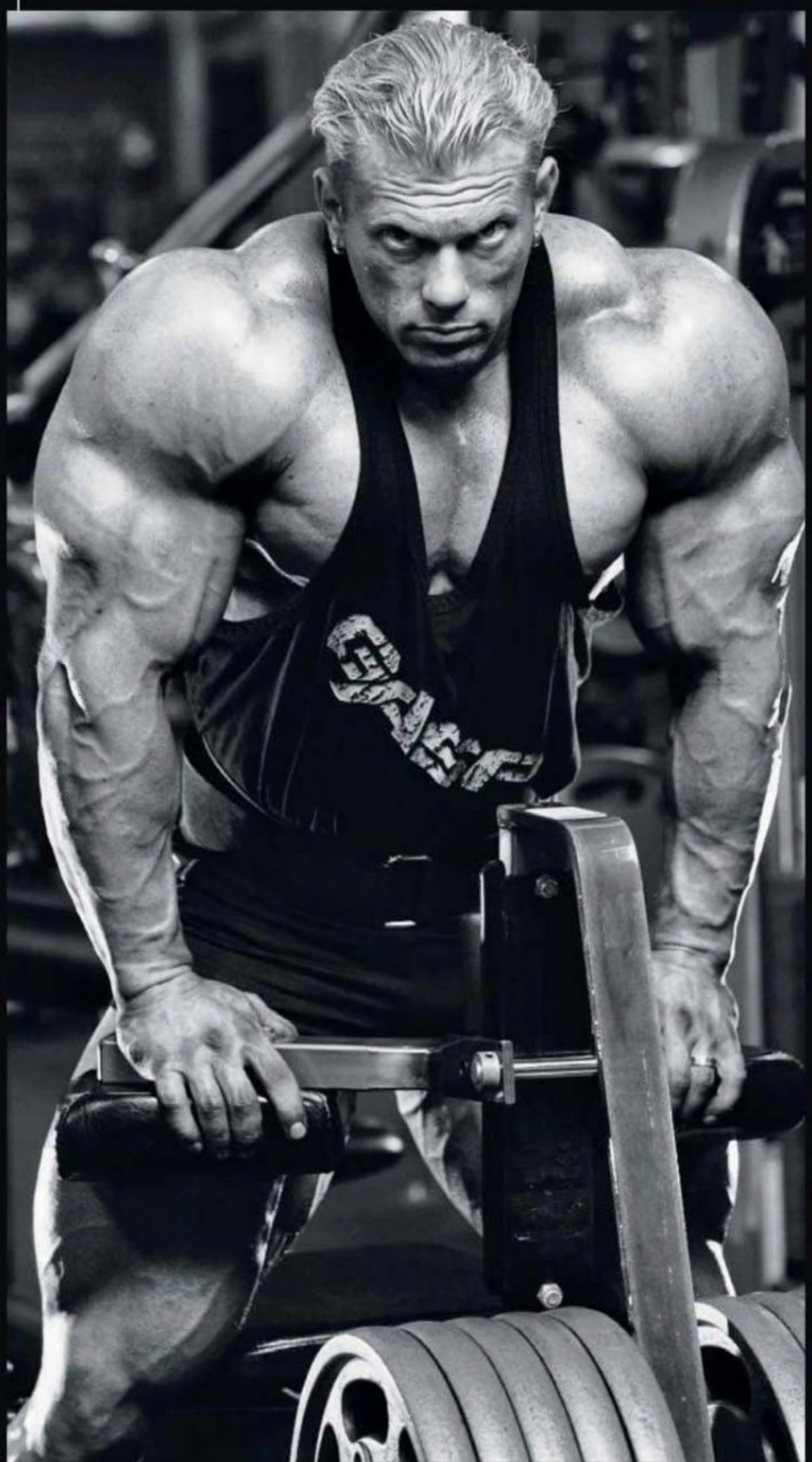
I actually try not to ever do cardio right after training a muscle group because I want to start recovering right away. If you do cardio after weights, then drink the shake after the cardio. If you have the choice, do cardio first thing in the morning. This burns more fat and doesn't interfere with your weight training at all. If getting to the gym that early or doing cardio outside isn't an option, look into getting a piece of cardio equipment for your home— it's a great investment for any competitive bodybuilder and will pay for itself in terms of convenience pretty fast! ■

Got a question for Mark Alvisi? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Mark personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, MD Staff and Pros, Q and A for Mark Alvisi.

DENNIS WOLF— THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

The Big Bad WOLF

By Dennis Wolf



Hey Dennis, I am very impressed by your physique. My current routine is:

Chest/Back	**Chest/Back**
Arms	**Arms**
Shoulders/Legs	**Off**
Off	**Repeat**

For each workout, I keep the volume moderate-to-low, since I am training certain body parts twice per week (I don't feel I am strong enough yet to be able to use enough intensity to only train a muscle once a week yet). I do about three exercises per body part and 3-4 sets each. I keep the reps each set at 6-12 and work up in weight each set. Does this look good? I know it will depend on individual recovery but have you ever trained certain body parts more then once per week?

Thank you so much for your kind words! When I started working out in the gym 12 years ago, I did almost the same program that you are doing now. It worked very well and I felt like I was making good progress with it. But after about a year and a half or two years, I could no longer ignore the fact that I was feeling tired and weak all the time. I hadn't been getting any bigger or stronger for a while. In fact, I seemed to be getting weaker on some things! I knew something wasn't right.

I did a little reading and asked some of the more experienced guys what they thought could be wrong, and the word 'overtraining' kept coming up over and over again. I decided to try switching up my program and working each body part once a week, just to see if that helped. What do you know? It was almost like the first few months of training, when I was growing pretty fast. I was making such noticeable gains that everybody at the gym thought I had some secret to explain my sudden growth. My strength was increasing every week, too. I bet that if you cut back to working all your muscles once a week instead of twice, you will see some great results as well.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL



I have gone from 112 pounds to 118, eating about 2,800 calories a day. (I know— ridiculously underweight, but hey, that's why I am trying to gain now!) I have been getting about 270 grams of protein a day, around 250-270 grams of carbs, and around 75-80 grams of fat. My weight has stalled around 118, so I am bumping my calories up to 3,000. I keep protein intake at 2+ grams per pound so I know that it isn't the problem.

Where should I add more calories— from carbs or fats? Do you think 250 grams of carbs a day is enough with my training, and just up the fats? Or should I increase them both a little? Also, have you heard of Ezekiel breads and cereals? I get most of my carbs from these. They have lots of fiber and complete protein as well. Other carbs are sweet potatoes, fruits like blueberries, apples and bananas (usually 2 pieces of fruit a day), waxy maize, and Gatorade during workouts.

I think your protein and fat intake is not a problem as it sounds like you are getting enough of those. I think you should increase your carbs to 300 or 350 grams a day. That should be adequate at your bodyweight. But I am really just guessing. You need to to play around with it a little and see for yourself. I would first raise it to 300 grams and see how that goes. If you feel good and you start gaining some weight again, 300 might be right. If nothing changes, raise the carbs again to 350. You might even need 400 or more every day if you have a very high metabolism, even though you aren't a large person.

Everybody has their own opinion about what is the best type of carbohydrate for making gains. For me, I eat almost all potatoes and noodles in the off-season. Fruits like apples, different types of berries, and bananas are OK too, but I think you really need complex carbs to make solid weight gains. The bread is also OK. I do think waxy maize starch is a great type of carbohydrate to take right after your workout. I use a product called Volu-Gro from Nutrex that contains waxy maize and creatine. It can also be used during the workout if you feel you need some more glycogen in your muscles.

Summer Dieting: Not So Bad

Sometimes I hear people say they feel sorry for me because I have to diet during the summertime for the Mr. Olympia. I do remember that it was hard the first couple times I had to do that earlier in my career. I was younger and single and summer is usually when you go out and do more fun things with your friends. You really don't want to have to worry about eating every two hours and bringing a cooler full of food everywhere you go. But now it's normal for me.

I love contest prep because I get to see my body change almost every day, plus this year I am only dieting for eight weeks. My diet doesn't start until the very end of July, so I'm only dieting for half the summer. People also ask me if it stinks that I can't go to the beach. Honestly, the last time my wife and I went to the beach was five years ago! With my very, very light skin, I have to put on number 50 sun block about an inch thick all over, or else I burn like a lobster! So all in all, I am not missing out by dieting during the summer.



DENNIS WOLF—The People's Choice

Michael Jackson, Rest in Peace

I think we were all shocked by the sudden death of Michael Jackson. There are not many celebrities who are famous in every corner of the world like he was. As a kid in Russia, we all knew his music, and later on when I moved to Germany, his songs and videos were just as popular there.

I have always been a fan of his music, but I was never a fan of his personality. Michael was a very strange man in so many ways— the way he looked because of so many surgeries, the crazy clothing he wore, his very high-speaking voice. He made his house like a circus and surrounded himself with children and animals. I think his best friend for a long time was Bubbles the Chimp! But I don't judge Michael for the way he was. I guess he was a very unhappy man and I would not be too surprised to learn that he had ended his own life on purpose.

iPod: Don't Leave Home To Do Cardio Without It!

When I do my weight training in the gym, I just listen to whatever they are playing on the sound system. It's not really important because I am focusing on the weights, my form, and the feeling in my muscles. But cardio? That's a different story! Cardio is so very boring and repetitive that I could never make it through without some music to pump me up and keep me going. I have a lot of heavy metal and hard rock on my iPod to help me wake up during my morning cardio. If I didn't have that, I could fall asleep on the treadmill. I have caught myself nodding off in the past!

Favorite Footwear in the Gym:

I have something in common with Mr. Olympia Dexter Jackson— all I wear in the gym are Nike Air Jordans.

Dieting Insomnia?

I hear a lot of bodybuilders talking about how terrible they sleep when they are dieting. I think I must be lucky, because I don't have this problem. I do wake up an average of twice a night to use the bathroom (maybe my bladder is not so big as my muscles?), but then I am able to get back to sleep easy again.

The Olympia is Easy— Try Raising a Teenage Girl!

My stepdaughter is now a teenager. She has already been dating for a while, and now she has a steady boyfriend. He knew who I was and what I looked like before he came to my house for the first time to meet me, and it was pretty funny because he was scared. Maybe I can look mean if you don't know I am actually a very nice guy.

I gave this guy a lot of credit because no boy before him ever had the courage to come to our house to pick her up and meet me. I think they would only come over when I was at the gym, or else they would meet her for dates somewhere else. I know I can be strict with her and who she hangs around with, but you have to, these days. If you don't know where your kids are and who they are with, they can get into a lot of trouble.



More Wolf on the MD Forum!

I have to say to all my fans that visit my thread on the MD Forum that I am very sorry I have not been posting very often. Some people are on their computers for hours and hours every day, even if their job doesn't call for it. I am not like that. I go online maybe three or four times a week just to check my e-mails and then I sit down and answer all those for maybe an hour. But I do promise that I am going to start posting more on my MD thread. I realize that for many of my fans it would be nice to hear from me more often. But I still won't be on my computer all day and night— that's just not me!

German Pro Show Cancelled

There was going to be a very big pro show here in Germany after the Mr. Olympia, but it was canceled. That's too bad because we haven't had a pro show here in a while and this one was going to be incredible. I suppose the U.S. economy had something to do with it. I know this is old news to you guys, but for the bodybuilding fans here in Germany, it's still something they talk about. It was going to have all the top Mr. Olympia competitors and even **Ronnie Coleman** was supposed to compete!

Let's hope they do it in 2010, because the fans here, and really from all over Western Europe I bet, would all come out to support it. The last time they saw shows that good were when the Olympia used to be held in Europe every other year, and they stopped doing that after the 1992 show when **Dorian** won for the first time in Finland. ■

Got a question for Dennis Wolf? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Dennis personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, MD Staff and Pros, Q and A for Dennis Wolf.

MIKE LIBERATORE—THE LIBERATOR

IRON Mike

By Mike Liberatore



Like you, I have a hard time eating a lot of food. I can choke down my protein but have trouble getting my carbs in. Can I use Vitargo in the off-season instead of say, a potato or a bowl of rice? Also, do you miss being onstage this year?

Vitargo will work, or any brand of waxy maize. I do think the body handles solid carbs better, but if you have no appetite for them than you gotta do what you gotta do to get the needed carbs in. I don't necessarily miss competing yet, because I did three shows last year from June to November. But I do miss seeing my body change and getting ripped. I'm sure once I go to the National shows this year I'll miss being up there. I have 11 months till I compete again. It feels weird to have all this free time and to not be slaving away on cardio every day!

I'm coming up on my first show in two weeks and I'm already looking forward to my first off-season to put more size on. However, I want to stay lean for the summer. So my plan was to start up my off-season in August and go through December, which would give me around five months to put on size before competing again next year. Do you think that amount of time is sufficient, and how long does your off-season last?

Your plan sounds OK. I always believe in breaks after a show. Your body and mind need the time off. As for an off-season, five months is the minimum amount of time that I like. In 2008 I really didn't have any off-season, because I was dieting all year! This year is the total opposite— an entire year to lift heavy, eat, and grow. The keys for you will be eating enough quality food, training smart, and sleeping. If you do all this to the best of your abilities, you'll add some quality size.

My fiance is an amateur bodybuilder, doing his first competition next year. Obviously, you've done the hard work at the gym and the ritual eating and then difficult dieting (absolute respect to you by the way) so you know what he's up against and how he's feeling. What's the best way to be mentally supportive? Thanks!

This is the best question I think I have heard yet. The first show is always the hardest on a couple. Neither person knows what to expect or how they will react. Let me tell you that it will not be easy. He will most likely have mood swings and he won't know he's doing it, so give him his space. He may seem distant and distracted. Do not take anything personally. Leave little petty things alone, have a talk about things after he is done dieting. You'll both smile and he should acknowledge what you are saying after he has eaten.

Don't always blame things on the diet, though. He might be upset because of work problems, etc. His sex drive will decrease toward the end of the diet. His body will not be worrying about reproduction when it's trying to protect itself from starvation. So don't think there is something wrong with you. He'll need all of your support to help him succeed. Contest prep is much harder on your own. Let your friends and family know that you guys won't be as social. I stop going out completely at six weeks out. I will go to the movies and eat a meal right before I go in; that is about it for the last six weeks.

Hang in there and it will be over in three months. It will be easier the next time around, I promise. If he does care, he'll thank you after it is over— my wife says jewelry is a nice way to show your appreciation!



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL



My Mr. Olympia Picks

This is the first time I have ever been asked to officially make predictions about the Mr. Olympia contest, so here goes! I won't go through the whole lineup, but I will do my best to comment on all the possible top 10 guys.

KAI GREENE

Total freak! This show could be his to win, and a lot of people think it might happen. My only concern is that he tries to come in even bigger than he was at the Arnold and sacrifices condition. Kai doesn't need any more size, just crazy, grainy-hard condition. If he brings that to Vegas, 'The Predator' could be Mr. O.

DEXTER JACKSON

He's the reigning Mr. Olympia, and snatching the title out of his hands won't be easy unless he leaves the door open by showing up off his best. I don't know what the odds of that are, because 'The Blade' is amazingly consistent. Now that he has the Mr. O, I doubt he will risk losing it by not being shredded to the bone.

VICTOR MARTINEZ

Victor is a big question mark in my mind. Will he look the same as the Arnold, with his legs a little smaller and softer still? Or will he get that 2007 look back, when he won the Arnold and should have won the Olympia? The 2007 version of Victor could win the show this time. Let's see which Martinez we get.

JAY CUTLER

Another mystery. If Jay can revitalize his physique and get his 'wow factor' back, the two-time champ is more than capable of winning a third title. He has beaten all these guys before. Lately it seems like his body has been going downhill and showing his age (the guy has been competing for 16 years). I'd like to see him at his best again to give the other guys a tough fight.

PHIL HEATH

Phil is another guy who could win this show. Last year he was one hell of a third place, with probably the best condition in the show and truly freaky arms and shoulders. He's had a whole year to bring up his chest and back, and if they are both a lot better than they were in '08, 'The Gift' could be very hard to beat.

DENNIS WOLF

Dennis has all the potential in the world. From the front, he dominates, especially in the front relaxed pose in the Symmetry round. In that shot, he is Mr. Olympia—from the back, not so much. I still want to see more lower back thickness. And from the side, his hams don't quite match his quads. That's a liability when you're next to guys like Heath, Kai, and Dexter, who all have those hanging hams.

BRANCH WARREN

Normally I would say Branch could easily be in the top five. But this is a ridiculously stacked lineup this year, and he's up against guys with mass, condition, and pretty shape. He works damn hard, so I hope he does crack that inner circle at last.

SILVIO SAMUEL

Silvio will probably have the best condition in the show, but he will get out-muscled in this lineup. I still see him making the top 10, but probably just barely.

TONEY FREEMAN

I thought Toney looked incredible last year when he took fifth. He was almost good enough to win! This year, he might have trouble looking big enough up against the top guys like Kai, Wolf, and Jay.

MELVIN ANTHONY

Melvin has a similar type of physique to Heath, with pleasing shape, round muscles, and tiny joints. The only thing that might keep him out of the top six this year is his lack of condition in the glutes and hams. If all the other guys have it and he doesn't, he will slide down the placings.

MARKUS RUHL

I was happy to hear that Markus is giving the Mr. O one last shot. He's a real crowd pleaser and the original freak. I don't know how well he will place, but I know he will make the show more exciting just by being up there.

DENNIS JAMES

I'm not sure how much gas DJ has left in his tank, or how willing the judges are to give him a good look after all these years. I do prefer the more streamlined version he's been showing us lately.





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MIKE LIBERATORE— The Liberator

'The Fix Was In' At The Illinois Championships?

I need to clear up an alleged statement I made that Mel Chancey only won the recent NPC Illinois Championships because he is a friend of promoter Chuck Sanow and trains at his gym in Chicago. I never said such a thing. MD readers should remember Mel from his feature story awhile back— 'Mr. 187' was once the leader of the Chicago chapter of the Hell's Angels. Unfortunately, the Illinois amateur bodybuilding scene has a lot of haters who get jealous when one of their own gets any fame or recognition.

Mel won the Overall because he was the biggest guy up there and had the thickest back by far. It's always tough for a smaller guy to compare to a bigger guy. Mel was about 250 pounds, and the Heavyweight winner was only 203. From where I was sitting, Chancey was the best pick for the Overall. There was a guy named Chris who I felt should have won the light-heavies, but didn't; that would have given Mel a much better run for the money, but he never got the chance. I want to see Illinois bodybuilding grow, and that can't happen if we are all bickering among ourselves and making spurious allegations!

A Triumphant Return to Chicago

I have to thank promoter Chuck Sanow for bringing me out to guest pose at his NPC Illinois. It was awesome to be back as a pro to the same show where it all began for me five years ago. And as some of you know, it was not a very memorable experience. I took third in the middleweights because I had to leave the stage before I passed out. Here are some of the stupid things I did getting ready for my first contest:

- Started cutting my water back on Monday
- Only started cardio at two weeks out
- Ate gyros without bread and thought that was a clean meal
- Ate Atkins ice cream because the carbs were 'zero impact'
- Didn't start my carb-loading until three hours before prejudging

Needless to say, I did not have very good advisors. I still managed to look pretty good, mainly because I was always lean anyway. But I have a good laugh now every time I think back to how completely clueless I was just five years ago.

Off-season Update

As I write this in early July, my weight is up to a pretty hard 256. My goal was to get to 260 before I need to start coming down, so I am ahead of schedule. It's not about the weight on the scale of course. That just happens to correspond to the improvements in mass I need to make. I am also pretty close to deciding on what my first pro contest will be. Actually, I already know, but the time isn't right yet to make the announcement. Stay tuned!

Shout-outs

By the time you read this, I will have celebrated my one-year wedding anniversary on August 9. How time flies! I want to thank my two training partners for being good sports. Not everybody would have the sense of humor to appreciate being called out in an international magazine for blowing off workouts. Just to show that I'm a fair man, I am going to call myself out for missing a couple workouts with the guys last week. They asked me, how come it's OK for you and not for us? You know what I said? "Because I'm a pro and you're not!" Just kidding – my training is actually more critical because this is what I do for a living now. ■

Got a question for Mike Liberatore? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Mike personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, MD Staff and Pros, Q and A for Mike Liberatore.

EVAN CENTOPANI

BEAST From The EAST!

By Evan Centopani



First off, let me say after seeing your chest videos on the MD site— Evan, you look like a whole new bodybuilder! You're so full and grainy! I do have a question about back training. I'm trying to bring my lats up, as they need a lot of work. Would I benefit by putting my lat-width exercises before exercises like rows and deadlifts? Or should I keep the rows and deads first in the workout while my energy is up?



I think rotating the order of exercises is a great idea. You will have more juice in the beginning of your workout and putting different exercises first will allow you to focus more on them. I wouldn't do this all the time, though. It's important to give a lot of energy to the big movements like deadlifts and barbell rows. But doing chin-ups first, every other workout, would be a good idea. They are also very valuable in building a wider back. You could even throw a couple sets of them in on another training day in the week, too. I know Kai does that, and look at his back!

To really build your legs from 2007 to now, what did a typical 'Leg Day' look like for you? And can you do front squats, regular squats, and leg presses all on the same day or would that be too much? Thanks a lot.



For quads:	
Squats	5 sets
Hack squats	4 sets
Lunges	3 sets
Extensions	3 sets
Hams:	
Stiff-leg Deadlifts	5 sets
Glute-Ham Raises	5 sets
Lying Leg curls	3 sets

If you're giving it all you've got, squats, front squats and leg presses in one day is almost impossible—unless you rest a long time between sets and sip some carb drink. But even then, the workout would probably take you well over two hours, and I still think the exercises you do earlier would be the ones you got the most out of. A human being only has so much energy to expend at once.

I am in contest-prep mode right now. I work at Sam's Club right next to the bakery and I have been noticing the weirdest cravings I never even had when I was bulking, for foods I normally don't even like! Have you ever had that? My show is still almost 20 weeks away and I am down from 235 to 208 already.

The cravings you get when you diet can be funny. I usually crave fruit so badly, like a big, sweet, juicy piece of watermelon. Yup, that would do it for me. You're not com-

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

peting until October? Be careful you don't over-diet and waste away! Being ready a little early is a good thing, though. If you're shredded a few weeks before the show, you can slowly add more carbs in and just get fuller, harder, and grainier. Good luck!

I am 18, 5'9" and 175 pounds— but I am 22-23 percent body fat (so I'm skinny-fat; I went on a horrible bulk diet after my eating disorder). I seem to respond better to low carbs, but everybody keeps telling me it's bad at my age. What do you think I should do in regard to diet and cardio? I don't planning on competing anytime soon.

Also, what are your thoughts on training for teens? Do you think after they have learned to master the basic exercises, they can do some traditional splits? Or do you think they should stick to simple/basic training for a while?

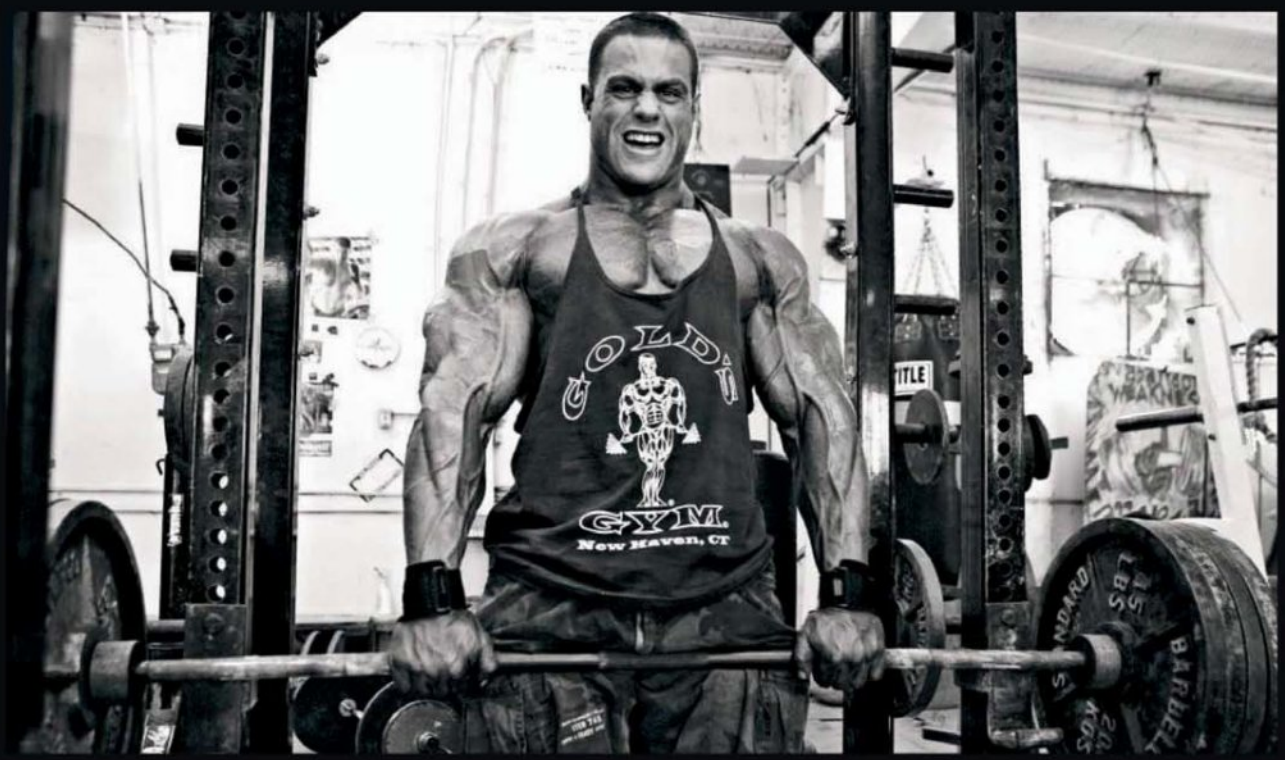
I think low carbs is the way to go for most people. I think it's better for your health and most people would feel and look much better taking in less carbs— unless, of course, you're an athlete or do some type of manual labor. In those cases, you would need a substantial amount of carbs for energy. But for most people, the carbs just make them fat and unhealthy. I think a low carbohydrate diet (assuming you are taking in adequate amounts of quality proteins, healthy fats, and green vegetables) is a great idea. For you I would train with weights three days a week. For example:

Monday:	Legs (Squats)
Wednesday:	Chest (Alternate flat and incline barbell presses)
Friday:	Back (Deadlifts)

I would spend no more than 45 minutes on each session, but spend the whole time on just one exercise. MASTERING the basic movements is very important and is



something most people NEVER do. Besides, these movements will involve all the major muscle groups in your body, as well as burn a lot of calories. On the days you don't weight train, go for a fast walk. Cardio is good for everyone. Stick to maybe a half hour or so. This is a very solid start.



First, I would like to say congratulations to you and your team on your win at the New York Pro. My question is about food consumption. I have recently started bulking and I was able to put on a quick 30 pounds and only have my body fat raise half a percent. I eat pretty clean all year round and follow some of the foods you eat.

I have hit a plateau in the last month or so. I was wondering aside from what the public sees in your videos, columns etc., what food works to help you put on good mass?

I have a problem with body fat percentages. Let me use a very simple example to show you why. Suppose for the sake of argument you are 100 pounds with 50 percent body fat. That's 50 pounds of muscle and 50 pounds of fat. Let's say you manage to double your weight to 200 pounds, and you keep your body fat the same— 50 percent. Great, right? Your body fat percentage didn't change. But you still gained another 50 pounds of fat!

I don't test my body fat. I don't even like to weigh myself too often. If it's the off-season, I only use the scale occasionally to make sure I am on the right track and gaining. When I diet, I also use the scale to monitor my weight, but then it's to make sure I'm not dropping weight too fast. My most important tool is the mirror. It always tells me what kind of condition I'm in.

The toughest thing about using the mirror for most people is that it's difficult for them to be objective. You have to train yourself to be brutally honest and know when you're carrying too much body fat.

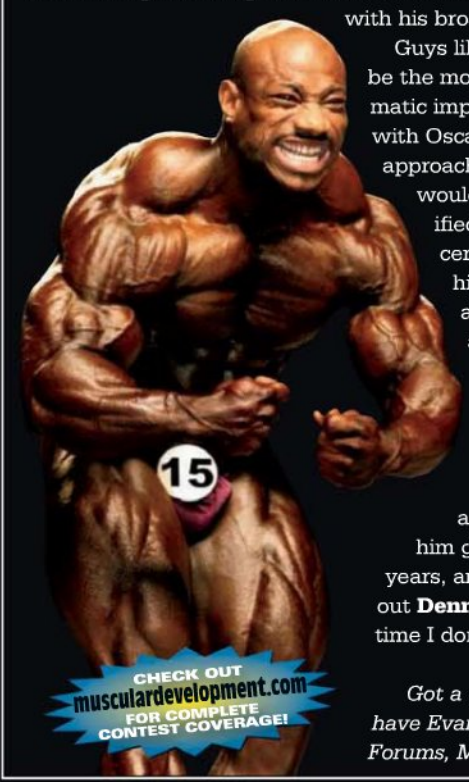
As far as good foods for gaining, do you think I have been holding out on you and keeping secrets or something? It's not rocket science. Eat plenty of stuff like chicken, beef, eggs, and add in calorie-dense foods like whole-fat yogurt (sold in grocery stores as Greek yogurt). Take in enough complex carbs like rice, sweet potatoes, and oatmeal to fuel your workouts and recovery, and get healthy fats from raw nuts or natural peanut butter.

If you really need to boost your calories and have a hard time eating enough, add a couple tablespoons of olive oil or macadamia nut oil to your meals. One thing I don't believe in is stuffing yourself seven or eight times a day like some guys do in an effort to make gains. If you really need to go to those extremes, maybe you weren't meant to be huge. I think it's unhealthy to eat that much and puts an enormous strain on your digestive system and liver.

But regardless, you should be proud to have gained 30 pounds. That's a hell of an accomplishment. I don't know how much more you want to gain, how much you can gain, or should gain, but don't let your body fat get too high and by all means, do some cardio at least three times a week to keep your circulatory system running well.

My Mr. Olympia Predictions

Dexter Jackson is the current Mr. Olympia, which automatically, and rightfully, puts him in contention to win again this year. In my mind, the top three contenders after him are **Kai Greene**, **Phil Heath**, and **Victor Martinez**. They all have very different physiques, with their own unique strong points. I think Phil has the most desirable physique in pro bodybuilding today. Nobody else quite has that type of look now, with the small waist and all those round muscle shapes. If he's lacking one thing, it's what's been said a thousand times already— clavicle width. That's one area Victor kills him on with his broad shoulders. It's a look people tend to associate with Mr. Olympia.



Guys like **Lee Haney**, **Dorian**, **Ronnie**, and **Jay** all had really wide shoulders. Kai could be the most dangerous man in the lineup. He's already shown he's capable of making dramatic improvements in a short time. I got to know him a little bit while I was working with Oscar for my show, and Kai is hungry to be the best and takes a very aggressive approach to getting there. Knowing what he's all about and who he has in his corner, I would be very worried right now if I were Dexter. If I was doing the show (I am qualified but I know I'm not ready yet), he would be the guy I would be most concerned with having to beat. All he really needs is to bring a little more thickness to his shoulders, chest, and arms to be get that truly powerful look and be just about unbeatable. Phil and Victor have that, but Kai already has dominant back and legs. Those have been key body parts for a Mr. Olympia winner for many years.

I still think Victor can take the whole thing too, if he brings that dry, grainy look that he hasn't quite ever shown yet. I don't want to write off **Jay Cutler**, either. He's one of the hardest-working men in the sport, and one of my favorite bodybuilders of this era. Jay gets knocked a lot, but I will go on record as saying I think he was a great Mr. Olympia champion. I'd actually love to see him get his title back. Something has been a little off with him for the past couple years, and if he's figured out how to remedy that he could easily win again. I can't leave out **Dennis Wolf**. Though I think he does have Mr. Olympia potential, but at this point in time I don't see him being a real threat. ■

Got a question for Evan Centopani? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Evan personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, MD Staff and Pros, Q and A for Evan Centopani.

CHAD NICHOLLS
The Contest GURU

Countdown to the Olympia

I'm really looking forward to this year's battle at the Mr. Olympia, as it is anyone's show this year. One thing I can guarantee is that my guys will be ready! **Dennis Wolf** is currently at his biggest and best off-season yet— which will make for a fantastic showing in September. We are pulling out all the stops to give the audience and judges exactly what they expect from Dennis— and at a thick and ripped 285 come this year's Olympia, he will *definitely* exceed expectations!

As well, let's throw **Gustavo Badell** back into the mix— I've been working with him for a couple of months now and he's making great improvements. Don't be surprised if Gustavo replicates and/or surpasses the physique that brought him fame at the 2004 Mr. Olympia.



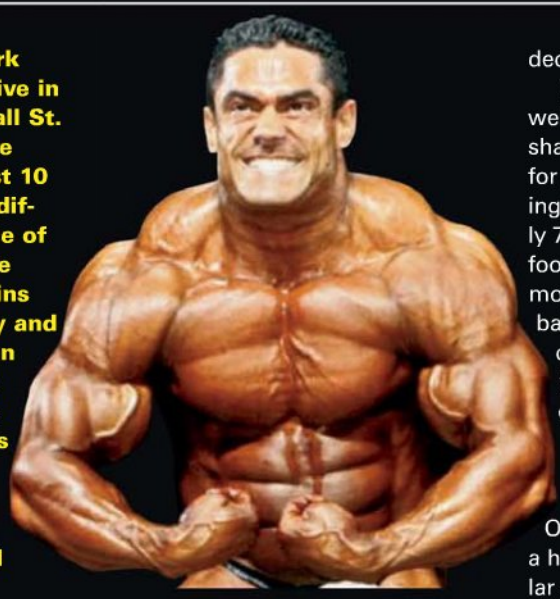


PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

Chad Nicholls—The Contest Guru

Melvin Anthony has been an annual top 6 finisher for several years running and he's here this year to show everyone that he's ready to move higher up the food chain. We have a couple of tricks up our sleeve to get Melvin to the top of the ladder this year.

Last but definitely not least— after a fantastic comeback from a possible career-ending injury— **Victor Martinez** has had his best off-season ever and is on track to better his 2007 people's choice Mr. Olympia form! With no signs of injury, he's back to kicking ass and taking names! Here's a bit of insight into their 2009 preparation plans.



I am a big fan of your work and your column. I used to live in your neck of the woods (small St. Louis suburb), but now I have lived in Las Vegas for the last 10 years. I train at about three different gyms out here and one of them, I'm proud to say, is the gym that Gustavo Badell trains at! He's just a super-nice guy and though I only know him as an acquaintance, I can say that he is great and always takes the time to answer questions and he's just one of my favorite bodybuilders.

Someone in the gym the other day told me they heard you are now working with Gustavo?! Is this true? I think he's one of the best in the world and thought he could have won the Olympia. If this is true, can you let us in a bit on how that came about and what you guys are doing? I hope you can get him back up there where he belongs!

Thanks for writing and for your question. Yes, it is true— shortly after this year's Arnold Classic, Gustavo got in touch with me and we had several conversations about his plans and what I would like to accomplish with him. We are both on the same page in terms of goals and expectations and we have now been working together for a couple of months.

During our conversations, we talked about the fact that though he has presented us with several different versions of his physique over the last several years, what is still in the back of everyone's mind and what the judges are longing for is the 2004 physique that garnered Gustavo an impressive 3rd place finish in a very tough Olympia lineup. Since that time, he has yet to replicate that combination of mass and conditioning— which is the primary goal of our game plan.

After 2004, Gustavo has been through a period of ups and downs in the attempt to better the physique that gave him notoriety. However, it seemed that in the attempt to hone his physique, he lost some of the thick muscularity and sharp conditioning from 2004. Athletes like Gustavo have a 'brutal' dominance onstage: this is what made him stand out and this is what he needs to make the judges stand up and take notice once again. Gustavo is the exact type of athlete I enjoy working with: he is dedicated, focused and ready to put in the hard work necessary to reach the desired outcome. Gustavo truly loves and lives bodybuilding, but sometimes all you need is a fresh perspective to catapult an already great athlete back up to the top, where he belongs; this is where my job begins.

In terms of competitions for this year, our plan is to go into the Atlantic City and when we nail everything there, we'll be headed to the Olympia! In order to do this, my first order of business was to shock his system. I think his body basically had stalled out and wasn't responding to what he had been doing: Gustavo had always followed a 'clean' diet in the off-season, in order to stay in decent 'appearance shape.'

When I began with Gustavo he weighed 260 and was still in good shape. Now after working with him for a few months and by incorporating an off-season diet of approximately 70 percent good/30 percent bad foods, he is up to 285 with much more thickness, density and overall balance, while still displaying decent conditioning. From here, our plan is to get him up to his highest point of weight and muscularity and maintaining it for as long as possible before bringing him back down and ready for the AC and Olympia. The longer he can maintain a heavy weight, the more his muscular size will mature, which will enable us to preserve more thickness and create much improved balance and conditioning come showtime.

As of this writing, we have four more weeks off-season, prior to beginning his contest prep. From day one, our plan was to come back to the stage even better than his dominant, brutal 2004 physique. Even though he has been up and down the last few contests, he is still an athlete who you have to give an immediate look, as everyone knows that he still has the capabilities of returning to his 2004 form and he is still one of the best in the world. You don't go from 3rd in the Olympia to someone who doesn't deserve a look. So I truly believe with the physique we plan to bring to the stage and with the added fullness, muscle and conditioning, he will really be able to shake things up. Though his diet and contest prep will ultimately dictate his outcome, his off-season has been instrumental in putting him back on the right path.

I was recently at your 2009 Muscle Mayhem show in Kansas City. Awesome show— one of the best amateur shows I'd been to in a long time. Props to you and

Kim— you guys run the show great, the guest posers were great and the quality of the athletes was awesome! I was there to watch a buddy of mine compete (he took 2nd in the heavies to the guy who won the Overall) and we both had a great time.

I was in the restaurant when you were eating lunch with some of your team on Saturday and I thought I heard you and Dennis Wolf say he would compete at the Olympia at 285?!? I didn't mean to eavesdrop— but I couldn't help but hear that number! Did I misunderstand or will he really be 285 at the O?

Thanks for the compliment about the show— we appreciate the support. Kim and I were pleased and felt it was one of the best shows we have promoted. Everything ran well and just 'clicked' great. We have a fantastic event staff— from our judges to our expediters and security— we thank you all for your help and support! We are all on the same page when it comes to wanting the show to run without a hitch— so we are glad you enjoyed it! This was the 3rd year for the Mayhem and I believe we had athletes from 10 different states. With every show, the quality of athletes keeps getting better and better and it was spectacular! I know the friend you are speaking of— he is a fantastic athlete— and he was in a very tough class— he looked fantastic!

Now, as for my conversation with Dennis, no, you didn't misunderstand and I think I know who you are, as you were sitting over to the side of another friend of mine— Mel. Our game plan this year is dominance and 285 pounds onstage will set that in stone. I know I've said this before, but Dennis has one of the freakiest physiques I've ever seen— not just in terms of structure, muscle, genetics and potential— but also in terms of how it responds to his program.

What I had to pay attention to most during his preparation was Dennis' metabolism. I have only met a couple of people in my life who have had as freaky of a metabolism as Dennis has. We started Dennis' diet in 2008 at about 10 weeks out— at five weeks out of the Olympia, Dennis was 285 pounds and basically ready. So, we were in a holding pattern for quite some time. As well, Dennis has the type of metabolism that rapidly picks up momentum the longer he diets— Kim was the same way. It got to the point that almost no matter how much cardio we took out of his prep or how much food we added back into his diet, his metabolism was just in overdrive.

As I pride myself on creating programs to suit each individual's specific needs, I knew for 2009 I would have to dig deep and think outside of the box. We chalked up 2008 as a learning experience and have since reconfigured his plan and the result: Dennis' off-season was fantastic. He is currently 315 and is dense, full and in decent shape. I had to work with Dennis on making certain to get all his foods in and as much food as possible— which can be a daunting task when having a busy travel schedule— but he followed things to the letter and his forward progress this off-season reflects that.

In terms of contest diet— this is where the excitement and challenge come into play. His plan is as far away from the body building 'norm' as possible. For me, the key is to constantly stay ahead of his physique— predicting what his body will do before it actually does it— and this is the way it will be from the start to the finish of his diet. Now that I know his physique well and by keeping ahead of his physique and metabolism, I'll be able to keep it in check, instead of trying to slow down his crazy metabolism. I am 100 percent convinced that Dennis will be at least 285 pounds onstage at the Olympia this year.

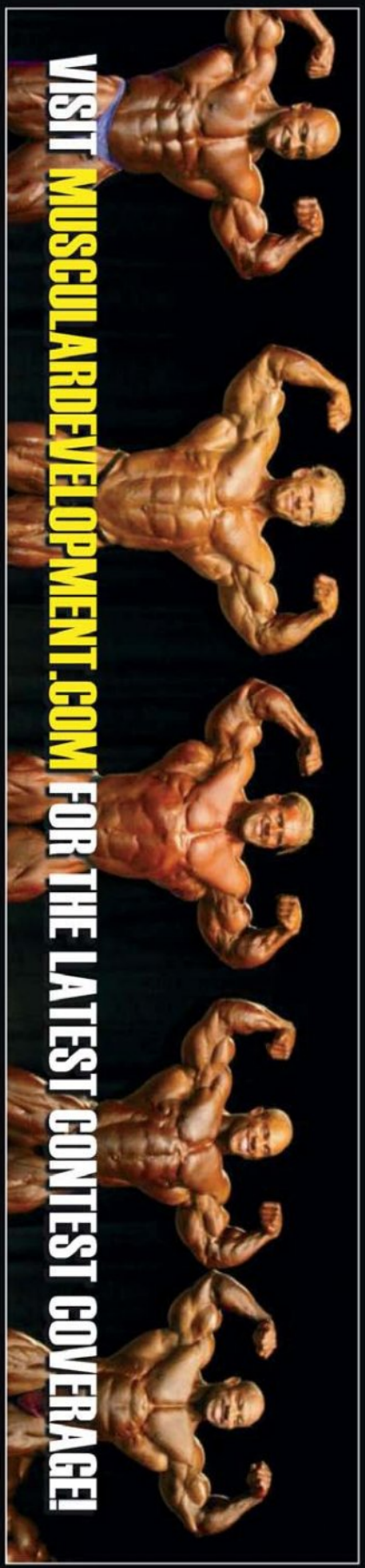
I think the difference in Dennis' physique this year will be monumental. During 2008, Dennis' high weight was around 305-306, just prior to beginning his Olympia diet, and we had only held at that weight for about a week. With a full off-season to work with Dennis after the Olympia, he has been at a solid 315 for quite some time (approximately two months). I'm confident that he will go up another 4-5 pounds before beginning his 2009 Olympia prep and with this in mind, his off-season weight will not only be heavier this year, but it will be more solid and mature and he will have a much harder, thicker look to his muscle. This teamed with fantastic conditioning will be exactly what the judges are looking for in Dennis.

I recently went to your Muscle Mayhem show— great show by the way! While I was there, I had the chance to meet Melvin Anthony— and he was one of the coolest pros I've ever met! He was talking to everyone, in a great mood and cracking jokes with everyone. He was also the biggest I'd ever seen him. After seeing how huge he was, I'm just wondering if you guys are going for size or conditioning this year at the Olympia?

For this year, it's pretty much similar to the game plan I have always wanted for Melvin's physique. What you see when you see Melvin is one of the most, if not THE most, structurally perfect guys in the sport today. Melvin's overall balance and structure is as good as anyone and he also carries the round, full muscle bellies that make his structure look even more incredible. Conditioning is the name of the game for Melvin— that's what I strive for with him every time we prep for a show, but this year I'm going about it a bit differently.

I know everyone gets impressed with Melvin's off-season size, but Melvin is the type of athlete who definitely does not need to focus on size— he has the type of structure that can place very high with decent muscularity combined with incredible conditioning because his overall structure is so good. Yes, at this point in time he is very big— he took quite a bit of time off to rest and recuperate during his off-season phase and he has put on some good size/weight— in Kansas City (Mayhem) he was at his heaviest— 278 pounds.

In terms of what we'll be doing this year— we are going to start his diet further out— about 15 weeks out of the show. He will probably hit the Atlantic City prior to the Olympia for a tune-up. For most guys already qualified and top contenders, you would think— why do it? However, I've learned over the years that the longer Melvin diets and the more shows he does, the bet-



Chad Nicholls– The Contest Guru

ter he continues to get. Doing some of the smaller shows along the way to the Olympia has helped us set 'mini goals' while striving for the big show and I think it pushes Melvin harder.

If Melvin comes in 10 pounds lighter than usual, but is in the shape of his life— we've struck gold and that's what we are going for. In addition to dieting longer, we are also eliminating his sodium from the very beginning. Melvin has a tendency to fluctuate fluids up and down at times due to varied sodium amounts in his food. By eliminating this from the very beginning, I will have a much more accurate gauge of his true progress and we won't have to worry about fluctuations in fullness and conditioning because of varying levels of sodium.

In addition to holding subcutaneous fluid, Melvin holds fluid within his skin, which can give his skin a thicker appearance onstage and hide some of his real detail. The elimination of sodium for a long period of time will allow us to thin his skin and eliminate the fluid both from the sub-q and from within the skin itself. From the results we are already seeing, I think this is the year that we put everything together for Melvin and bring something truly incredible to the Olympia stage. With that in mind— he's going to give everyone a run for their money!

I am a big fan of your column and your work! I am a born and raised native of the great state of NY and one of the lucky few who get to watch the incredible Victor Martinez train on a daily basis!!! I'm sayin' right now— this is the biggest and *best* Vic I've ever seen getting ready for a show and come September no one is touchin' this guy! What do you think about Vic this year and how do you think he'll end up compared to 2007?

I agree with you— I think this is the best Vic has ever been going into a contest prep phase. Prior to now, the off-season phase going into the 2007 was his best ever. At that time he was around 275 pounds. He was very solid at that weight for around a month and a half before beginning his 2007 prep. For that point in time, his conditioning was good and his best at that weight.

For the 2009 Arnold, though we always want to win, our primary goal was to keep his knee healthy and to make certain the balance between his legs was even. We wanted to eliminate any doubt as to whether there would be any issues with whether or not he could make a good comeback after his injury— and we accomplished that. Since that point, we have been able to continue our forward progress and in my opinion, now Victor is at the point of being the best ever coming into contest prep. Compared to 2007, he has been holding around 278-279 pounds for quite some time now, so his weight is very solid.

What is different this time around is that he is about 10 percent leaner than he was starting out in 2007, but about 4 pounds heavier now. With this in mind, I think we are going to easily match if not *better* 2007, and obviously the game plan going in is to better his all-time best. This time around, I will be able to implement our plan and process 100 percent and really push him to achieve his all-time best— which I wasn't able to do for the 2009 Arnold, since we didn't know exactly how far to push the carb-loading and water processes, as we had to worry about whether or not these processes would cause imbalances in his legs if pushed too far. Now that Vic's legs and body are balanced back out, we will be able to push things for the Olympia and go to our usual plan for carb-loading and pulling water.

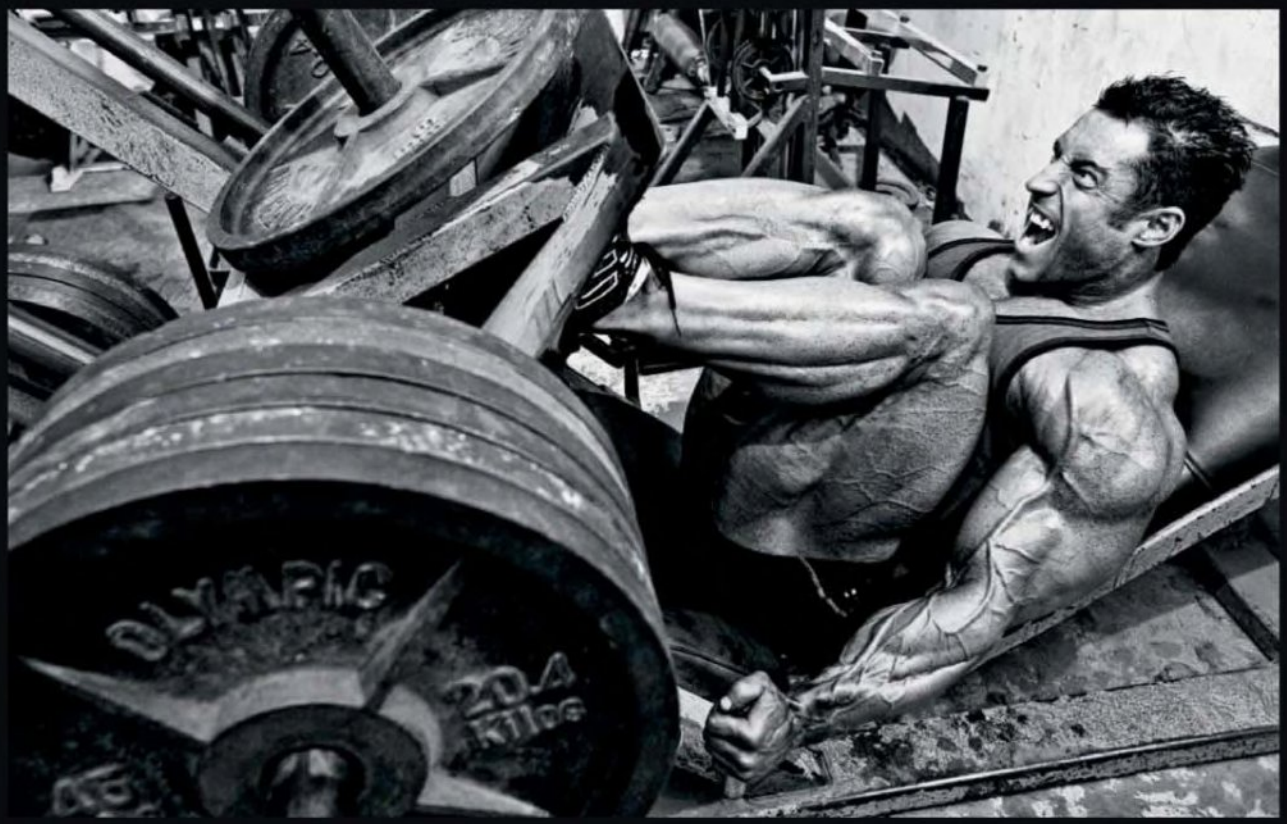
It's going to be a great show for Vic and it will definitely be his all-time best— I feel he will be around 5 pounds heavier than 2007 and around 5-10 percent leaner— but I think the overall package he brings will be the best yet and he will definitely be ready to battle for the Sandow in September.

My guys will be ready for battle and I know Jay, Dexter, Kai and Phil will all be ready for action— it's going to be a hell of a show and I hope to see you all there! ■

ERIK FANKHOUSER—NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION

Erik 'TheHouse' Fankhouser

By Erik Fankhouser



"The Aftermath"

What the fuck and where the fuck you been? Sometimes in life, things consume you and you get lost or caught up. We lose track of time. We lose our minds. We lose what really matters. We lose emotions. If this happens, you've got to find the source and you've got to stop the drift before it is too late. Some people call it being focused or driven. I have talked to many people who have found themselves like this, or I have seen it happen to people before. I have experienced it before— the feeling of no feeling.

I found myself so caught up in the game of bodybuilding that I lost touch with what was around me. I just called it being focused or being driven to win at all costs. Doing this made me lose focus of things around me in life. I think it happens to most people when they get ready for a show and start to diet. We, as bodybuilders, get a one-track mind and focus everything on one goal; we become selfish. Bodybuilding can play with your mind. In a sport where perfection is not good enough and always being bigger or leaner is better, we are playing with our minds. We can always chase that perfect image, but if we even got to that place, we would still think we could be better.

I can remember before bodybuilding I did not care what people said about my weight or how I looked. Hell, I was a football player and just wanted to score touchdowns and run over a few people in the process. Now when I am ripped and a few weeks out from a show, I still feel like I am out of shape. I guess it is because I will never look good enough in my own eyes. I think this is what makes us lose touch with the outside world when we become focused. Also, everything we do as bodybuilders is against the flow of society. The way we eat. The way we train. The way we look— but I would not have it any other way! I just think we, as bodybuilders, can get lost and lose track of what matters. I think certain things should come first and you should have fun and never lose touch or emotions while bodybuilding. Building a great body is a gift, not a curse.

"What Makes You"

I have always said you are your maker. You can stand up for what you believe in, or you can fold when shit gets tough. I know I stand up; I will never fold. I stick to my guns and do what I know is right. Bodybuilding will make you stronger, training will make you stronger, and dieting will

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

make you stronger— because you are standing up for what you believe in. I know too many people who try to talk the talk and walk the walk, but when it comes down to jumping, they freeze up and you see what they are truly made of.

Bodybuilding taught me that you can only trust a few people, and most people will use you as a stepping-stone. Step on you till they take you down, then find another step to step on— but the only problem is, they will run out of steps and end up going down. So what makes me is I have my stepping-stone. I know it will hold me up because I hold it up. It is a two-way street in this game. You scratch my back, I scratch your back. When I start to go down, they fight for me and when they start to go down, I fight for them.

I just hope you can find your feet on solid ground like I did. My solid ground is with Muscular Development and Universal Nutrition. They both have put time and energy into the sport of bodybuilding and helped me become a better bodybuilder. Also, my wife and family have given me solid ground since day one; without them I would not be where I am today. Thanks.

"Mr. O— My God, Who Knows?"

This year is going to be one of the best shows to date. I can't wait for Vegas. There are so many names who could win the show. Not to take anything away from Dexter or Jay, but there is no one who I can say is the front-runner. Dexter might have taken Jay down last year and still will take him down this year, but I think someone else is going to take them both down this time around.

You got Mr. Greene, who is a monster just like the Incredible Hulk. He looks like he just walked out of a comic book and poses with the best of them. Then you have 'The Gift'— and who knows what he will bring this year. If he got better like he has done each year it might do for the rest of the lineup. Mr. Wolf is hungry and ready to eat up the lineup with his size and symmetry. If he brought his back up, he might crack top three. Victor might get his victory but I don't think this is his year. One more year and he will be on top of his game again. Branch was game-on for the Arnold; if he brings the same package, then he will be right up in the running. The 'X-Man' is also a contender for the top five, but not top three in my book. So many different things could go down before the show, but if I could pick them now, I would go out and say:

1. Greene
2. Dexter
3. Heath
4. Cutler
5. Victor
6. Wolf
7. Branch



"My Training Journal"

Were did the time go?! I have been training crazy hard and getting things done around the house before the baby comes. Well, as you are reading this, the baby is probably coming out or already did. Our due date is September 4th. If it is the 4th today, then I am probably passed out and the doctors are looking at me. Well I get to be in the delivery room and it is crazy, LOL, and if it is the 5th, I bet I am sleeping by a new baby and changing some new poopie diapers. Then if it is the 6th, I might be pulling my hair out— LOL, just kidding.

I was always good with our first baby. Hell, I had Xavier doing squats by nine months and he knew his poses by one year. Well, that might not be good— but that is what dads are for, right? He is four now and he always asks me to train him. I have him on a flex-band workout. He wants to do it, so I show him how to get huge. He still is posing all over the house. Last week, he fell off the table, hitting a back double bi. I told him that was his lights-out shot and it was lights out that time! LOL!

Heather took the hot summer months very well. She was a trooper when it came down to it, and she kept me in line and got everything ready for the show we promote all at the same time. Talking about the show; it is this month and I hope it turns out as smooth as it did last year. Last year was kick-ass and we had 70 athletes. This year, I hope we hit 80. We should, since we have the bikini division this year.

The date of the show is September 12th at the Wheeling Island Hotel casino racetrack. If you need info, e-mail us at wvbodybuilding@msn.com, or go to www.erikfankhouser.net. After the show on Sunday the 13th, we are going to have a ABC lifting event at the Body Shop in my hometown. If you want to train with us, you can get info at www.animalpak.com on the forum.

This is a great month! I get a new baby the first week— in the middle of the month we promote the show— and then I get to be in Vegas the last week to see the New Mr. O! ■

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–Victor Martinez

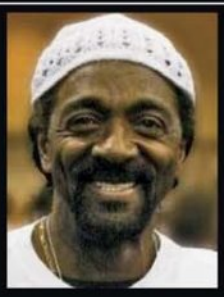


PER BERNAL

CHARLES GLASS

Trainer of Champions

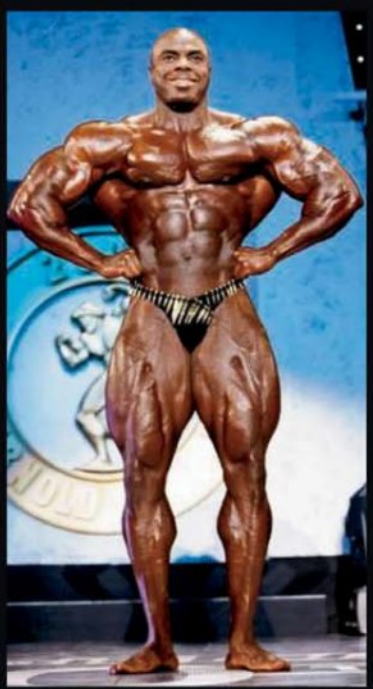
By Charles Glass



THE BODYBUILDING WIZARD

I am a 6'1" male bodybuilder and can't seem to get the round muscle bellies of my shorter counterparts. My muscles seem to stay long and lean. I have been training for five years with very heavy weights. Are there any particular free weight or machine exercises I should be doing that benefit tall bodybuilders? Hats off to Arnold and more recently, Gunter and Toney Freeman for getting physiques like theirs at their height!

Let's first try to define the 'round look' you're talking about. When we use that term in bodybuilding, we are referring to a pretty unique look to the muscles that not many guys have. Today, you could probably point to **Phil Heath** as the guy who really exemplifies it, and to a lesser extent, **Dexter**. **Flex Wheeler** was the poster boy for that look in the '90s.



You need to have very long muscle bellies, meaning they attach very close to the joint, and the joints themselves have to be tiny. Then, the muscles need to be developed to the extreme. That round look to the muscle bellies does depend mainly on your predetermined genetic makeup. But since you are referring to men like **Gunter** and **Toney Freeman**, I have a feeling what you really want is a lot more muscle thickness.

It is a bit more difficult to attain a thickly-developed look when your limbs are much longer than a shorter bodybuilder's. For example, a guy who is 5'7" could look pretty massive at 220 pounds with 18-inch arms. At 6'1", the same numbers aren't nearly as impressive. That taller bodybuilder may need to weigh 270 pounds and have 21-inch arms to appear 'as big.'



I wish you had given me more information about your current training and nutrition practices. Without that, it's hard for me to pinpoint what you need to change. One thing I did catch is that you say you train with very heavy weights. If my assumption is correct, you are probably doing most of your sets in a lower rep range, such as 4-6. If that's the case, you need to start upping your reps into the 10-12 range for upper body exercises, and 12-20 for your lower body. A good mix of free weight basic compound movements, along with an isolation movement or two, which could be done with a machine, is ideal for most people.

You also probably need to eat more. Never underestimate the critical role that nutrition plays in building muscle mass. Do your best to eat every two to three hours and get additional protein from shakes when you can't have solid meals. Most of all, be patient. As we said, it takes more mass to fill out a longer frame. The great news is that once you finally have that mass, you will be quite a specimen. As you have probably noticed, there aren't too many very muscular tall guys out there in the world!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

CHARLES GLASS—Trainer of Champs

I have a nagging tennis elbow where I've received three shots in the past year and while the first one kept me going for about eight months, the second shot missed the mark and therefore had no impact, the third one did hit the intended inflamed tendon but the affect only lasted a few months.

Do you have any advice on how I can continue training— I can't do any curls or overhead lifting exercises. Right now I am focusing on squats, dips, push-ups, and rack lifts— just basic compound movements. Lifting a teacup puts a strain on my right elbow— so it is pretty bad. Here is what I have been doing to get around my injury:

1. Dips: 5 x 5 (alternated with 5 x 8)— as you know, this hits the chest, triceps and shoulders
2. Squats: 5 x 5 or 1 x 20 (after a warm-up)
3. Dumbbell Pullovers: 1 x 20, 1 x 15
4. Deadlifts: 5 x 5 (alternated with 3 x 8)— alternated with squats
5. Stiff-legged Deadlifts on the days I do squats
6. Calf Raises: Standing/Seated
7. Abs

And that's pretty much it. It doesn't feel like I'm hurting my elbow/tendon and I'm pretty much hitting all the major body parts— gaining strength and size. Any thoughts on what else I could add that wouldn't hurt my tennis elbow and yet give me as complete a workout as possible?

Rather than give you workout tips, I feel it's my duty to emphasize treating your injury. The cortisone shots you have been getting are nothing but a quick fix that alleviates the symptom (pain), but does nothing to actually heal the inflamed tendon. Training around it is a good start, but you still need to address that chronic inflammation. What I suggest, and I know you will balk at this, is to take a couple weeks off of all upper body training. During that time, you should alternate soaking the elbow in ice water with applying a moist heating pad. Do this twice a day, and also take ibuprofen.

If you have a chiropractor or physical therapist, I also recommend getting ultrasound treatment on your elbow. When you resume upper body training, I want you to start doing triceps extensions twice a week with a rope attachment, but with light weight and very high reps— sets of 30-50. This is purely to bring blood into the area. Connective tissues have a notoriously poor blood supply, which is why any type of injury to them takes so long to heal. After about a month of that, you should be able to start doing a couple high-rep sets of presses for the chest and shoulders. Continue with the ibuprofen, as well as cold and heat treatments. You have been doing well with your abbreviated routine, but I think you would do even better if you could expand your repertoire and not be so limited with your choices of exercise.

I was advised to stop training my arms and shoulders by a couple of guys who say they get used in the other movements and they will probably grow from heavy chest and back work only, but I'm not sure. What are your thoughts?

I think that your arms would get some stimulation from the indirect work, but it wouldn't be enough to see optimal results. If that were the case, the best arm development in the world would belong to powerlifters. These guys can bench press and deadlift truly astounding amounts of weight, so it would stand to reason that this would carry over into tremendous arm size. But it doesn't.

The biggest and best arms belong to guys like **Lee Priest**, **Ronnie Coleman**, **Jay Cutler**, and **Victor Martinez**. Those guys all do plenty of direct arm training, as I'm sure you know. We can say the same thing about shoulders. Powerlifters definitely have big shoulders, but again, men like **Kevin Levrone** and **Nasser** in their primes, and today someone like **Dennis Wolf**, have the best combination of size, shape, and detail. You won't get that just from bench presses and deadlifts. You need to incorporate overhead presses, front, side, and rear lateral raises, and upright rows to see development like that. The guys who told you to stop training shoulders and arms probably mean well, but they are off base on this one.



All New Columns! Starting This Month

- Anabolics Q & A
- DORIAN's Blood & Guts
- Dr. X-Walk-in-Clinic
- The Gospel According to Lee
- Shred of Evidence- Anthony Almada
- Women's Bodybuilding!
- and POWER Bodybuilding- Justin Harris



CHARLES GLASS— Trainer of Champs

I believe I am an ectomorph. I'm tall and thin with small wrists and narrow chest. I started training roughly a year and a half ago and have put on a nice amount of weight. I went from around 185 to my current weight of between 195. That's the most I've ever weighed. But, I had about an eight-month layoff from May of 2008 to January of this year because I started a second job. I ate whatever I wanted whenever I wanted, and sometimes only once or twice a DAY! During that time I probably went to the gym about 10 times total.

Well, I held on to the weight I gained, surprisingly. I've started back in the gym about three times per week this past February and I'm seeing gains in muscle, slowly but surely. But I've lost my six-pack— and I really want it back! I've been doing abs about 2-3 times per week, with very slow progress.

I have a feeling you will tell me to do cardio. My question is, is it OK to do cardio twice a week for about 20-30 minutes of fast walking/light jogging, to help burn more fat off my stomach faster if my main goal is to gain muscle mass? I do want to see my abs again, but I don't want to screw up my gains!

If you want to gain muscle and lose fat at the same time, a moderate amount of cardio is just what the doctor ordered. Not only will cardio help you burn the fat that is covering your abs right now, but it will also stimulate your appetite. A guy like you who was only eating once or twice a day obviously has issues with his appetite. The key to achieving everything you want is to be consistent. Stick with your training, and consistently eat at least four high-protein meals every day, if not more (you can use protein shakes to get another couple servings in if you absolutely can't eat more than that).

Your concern that doing cardio twice a week at a moderate tempo is going to hinder your mass gains is unwarranted. You could probably double that amount and still make gains, as long as you don't increase the intensity of your cardio and you do make a real effort to eat more.

A Loaded Mr. O Lineup This Year!

Steve asked me to say a little something about the upcoming Mr. Olympia contest. It's tough to even narrow down who I think the top five in no particular order might be. It's probably safe to say that **Dexter**, **Jay**, **Kai**, **Phil**, and **Victor** will be in that group. But then again, there is also the chance that one or more of them might be edged out by someone like **Dennis Wolf**, **Branch Warren**, **Toney Freeman**, or **Melvin Anthony**. All of those men except Branch have been in the top five at least once before.

Speaking of Melvin, I ran into him at the NPC California in June and it looks like he will be coming in bigger than ever this year. However, I sincerely hope he didn't go overboard with his bulking to the point where he won't be in peak condition for the Olympia. I know he is capable of doing it, but he will have to suffer to do it, based on what I saw. I can't leave out my client **Silvio Samuel**, who could also be a threat, as well as **Dennis James**. Silvio has taken seventh place the last two years in a row at the Mr. O, and Dennis made the top four back in 2003.

My dark horse pick to really surprise people is **Troy Alves,** who won his first pro show earlier this year in Orlando. Troy's upper body is a work of art, and he is currently working very hard to get his legs up to that level. Of course, all the predictions and talk in the world don't mean a thing. We won't know what's really going down until we see this all-star lineup of the world's top bodybuilders step onstage in September. ■

Got a question for Charles? E-mail it to him at editor@musculardevelopment.com and you could see it answered right here in MD!

The PRO Creator

By Hany Rambod



Huge Gift, Pumped Jay, And Will Ronnie Return?

Phil Heath Update

'The Gift' was recently out here in California to train with me for four days. At 12 weeks out from the Mr. Olympia, he was a very solid 264 pounds. This is right around where he was last year at this time, but I can tell you he is much leaner at 264 this time around, which means he has added some quality muscle mass since then.

We started his prep earlier this year, giving him 16 weeks, as opposed to 13 last year. The additional time will work to stoke his metabolism and ensure that he's in his typical freaky condition. Phil has done a great job over the past year of increasing his base strength, and in fact he's made the best strength gains in that period that he has in any one year since I began working with him four years ago.



The area I was happiest to see experience increases was in his leg strength. Phil has been hesitant in the past to go heavy on movements like squats, because his many years of playing basketball at a high level did a number on his knees. Many people don't know that his knees were giving him so much trouble last year that there was actually a two-month period between the 2008 Arnold Classic and Mr. Olympia where he didn't train legs at all.

In the off-season following last year's Olympia, he brought his front squats up from 315-365 to 405, with a much more complete range of motion than he has previously used. Combining heavy front and back squats as base movements with hack squats or leg presses for his 7s has definitely added more sweep and roundness to his quads. Just for another example, Phil's barbell rows have gone from 275 to 315, but again, the numbers don't tell the whole story. The quality of Phil's reps, and the contractions he gets now in his lats due to the improved form have gone a long way toward beefing up his back to where it needs to be.

Another factor we intentionally focused on was Phil's travel schedule for 2009. Though Phil has still been traveling quite a bit, we made sure he did his European trips further away from the Mr. Olympia. Last year he got sick in England, and it took him a full two weeks to recover and get back on track again with his training. His final appearance this year will be at Dexter Jackson's contest in Florida, eight weeks out from the show. After that, he shuts down all traveling and will focus 100 percent on his Olympia prep.

The gains you will see in Phil's physique this year will be noticeable, but as always we emphasize gradual gains in muscular bodyweight from year to year. Phil plans to be a professional bodybuilder for many years to come, so there's no need to rush things and put undue stress on his system. Equally important, we have both seen far too many bodybuilders ruin their shape and lines by pushing their bodies too far, too fast under the mistaken impression that bigger is always better. Phil never had any intentions of being a flash in the pan.

Jay Cutler's Quest to Regain the Mr. O Title

No discussion about the upcoming Mr. Olympia would be complete without mentioning two-time champion and last year's runner-up, **Jay Cutler.** We worked together for a seven-month period during his off-season, in which time he made excellent gains using the FST-7 system. I can honestly say that there is a roundness and fullness to his muscles now that I



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PER BERNAL

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haven't seen since 2001, the year he actually beat **Ronnie Coleman** in the prejudging of the Mr. Olympia. Jay is also starting his diet at a leaner condition than he has for at least the last four or five seasons.

Another factor that could work to Jay's advantage in his quest to get his title back is the intensive deep-tissue therapy he has been having done for up to two hours every day. Previously, Cutler thought that his body asymmetry, pointed out by many critics over the last few years, was the result of a pinched nerve. After innumerable chiropractic treatments which failed to resolve the issue, he turned to deep-tissue massage.

Now he is confident that the real problem was merely bound-up tissue and adhesions from numerous minor injuries throughout his career that he had never addressed. These were mainly muscle strains, which would be expected in a man of his size who has been training heavy for close to 20 years. This affected his overall muscle separation, and was limiting the ability of certain muscle groups to fire during training.

Jay is already seeing improvements, and I give him props for being able to endure so much pain on a daily basis. Those of you who have had deep-tissue work done by a good practitioner known exactly what I'm talking about. Jay has sent me photos where he has the type of bruising you would expect to see from being brutally beaten with a baseball bat like Joe Pesci in "Casino"!

Ronnie Will be Back!

Last but certainly not least, eight-time Mr. Olympia **Ronnie Coleman** is now seriously contemplating a return to the Olympia stage in 2010. Ronnie was recently in my area to guest pose at the NPC San Jose Championships, and he's still carrying 300 pounds, despite not having trained seriously for the better part of a year. Ronnie has been working out two or three times a week, merely with the goal of maintaining his size. It's amazing when you compare the retired Ronnie to his old nemesis, **Kevin Levrone**.

Kevin slimmed down from 260 pounds to 190, while Ronnie's weight has only dropped about 20 pounds from his normal off-season weight while he was Mr. Olympia. This just goes to show you that Ronnie was always meant to be a big guy. You can see it in his massive bone structure and even looking at old photos from his high school football days when he already looked like a bodybuilder. Ronnie will be gradually stepping up his training and getting back to heavier weights again in the coming months. I can tell you that his biceps still look world-class, with their famous double peaks.

Another interesting change with Ronnie is his sleeping schedule. Back when I used to hang out more often with Ronnie around 2001 and 2002, he typically went to bed around 2:30 a.m. every night. Every year since then, he's taken to going to sleep about a half-hour later, to the point where he doesn't hit the sack now until six in the morning! People often wonder what exactly he's doing all night, to which Ronnie will tell them, "Answering e-mails and watching SportsCenter on ESPN."

One thing that hasn't changed much since his Mr. O days is Ronnie's eating habits. He still eats every three to four hours. Coleman isn't seen quite as often at Outback Steakhouse anymore, but he's still a daily fixture at Black Eye Pea, and has been known to hit IHOP every so often, as well. But all in all, Ronnie is rested up and definitely seems to be getting the fire to mix it up onstage once again, which is great news for his many fans around the world! ■

Note: Visit www.hanyrambod.com or www.fst-7.com for previous articles, news, an interactive forum, video clips, and member profiles and blogs. You'll also find updates on my current clients and who is preparing for upcoming contests. Free registration gives you full access to all of it. And now, due to popular demand, FST-7 shirts are finally available!

Got a question for Hany Rambod? You can ask him directly on the MD website and have Hany personally answer your question! Go to www.musculardevelopment.com, MD Forums, MD Staff and Pros, Q and A for Hany Rambod.

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By Lee Priest

I'LL BE BACK! OR WILL I?

Shall I or shan't I compete again? That is the question that's been on my mind quite a bit over the last couple months. Will my much-awaited comeback ever happen? I do hope so. I hear people talking online saying Lee Priest is done. They even tell me to hang up my posing trunks. Why bother coming back now after over three years away?

I had a great run— 13 years and over 40 pro shows. You know what? I ask myself the same thing every day. I always said that when the fans got sick of me I would quit, because I never liked competing much anyway after a certain point. For quite some time I only competed because I had a lot of loyal fans who wanted to see me onstage.

What I do love is training. I had a passion for it from the day I picked up my first weight at age 13 at the local police boy's club with my grandfather. As for dieting, my feelings are well documented— I fucking *hate* it! I like to be able to eat what I want, when I want, which has always made the dieting process a torturous pain in the ass.

My plan was to compete in the spring of this year, but fate had other designs. I blew out my shoulder tendon in the fall of '08 and didn't get it screwed back in place until spring of this year. Now the long journey of getting back what I lost has begun. It's a painfully slow process. The tendon is reattached and anchored in nice and solid, but every day I deal with pain in that shoulder.

Others might just say fuck it and quit training, but I could never do that. Even when the left arm was in a sling for a couple months following the surgery, I was still in the gym every day doing whatever I could with one arm. Now that I can use both arms again it feels strange. It's like teaching my shoulder how to move and work again after not using it at all for three months. So we know I will keep pumping that beloved iron, but will I compete again? I do plan on it— I still have that fire inside. True, it has gone down to embers at times, but it never went out. I just need some fuel to throw on those smoldering ashes to stoke that fire into an inferno once again.

The challenge for me now isn't really physical at all. I know I can look good enough again to stand up there with all the guys. But mentally, it's a matter of getting into that state of mind again. After three years away from the stage, it's hard to get that type of tunnel vision back. To be a top pro bodybuilder, you do need to have a selfish attitude. When you are getting ready for a contest like the Arnold Classic or the Mr. Olympia, the priorities have to be on your workouts, your meals, your sleep, and nothing— and nobody— else. And truth be told, I am not always a joy to be around when I have been on a diet for a while.

But will I compete again? I do plan on it— I still have that fire inside. True, it has gone down to embers at times, but it never went out. I just need some fuel to throw on those smoldering ashes to stoke that fire into an inferno once again.

I won my first contest at the age of 13 and I just turned 37. I feel like I have been around forever, like some sort of dinosaur that the comet missed. I've seen a lot of guys come and go in that time. Most retired, a couple died and more had serious health problems or career-ending injuries. Some were shooting stars that were gone so fast I hardly even knew their names. But here I am, still kicking around.

Bodybuilding should be about longevity, training smart, and staying healthy in the process. I was never big on the special 'supplements' used at the highest levels, and would avoid taking them as much of the year as I could. But when it's contest time, you do need them to hold on to your mass while you strip away all the body fat. I know many people will cry 'bullshit' at this, but I hate using those items just as much as I hate dieting. That's why I always used the smallest amount that would be effective, for the shortest period of time I could get away with; and still have the look I needed on contest day.

I take my 'comeback' day by day. When November rolls around, I will start my diet and my first contest prep in over three years. If all goes well and I feel I look good enough, you will see me onstage in the spring of 2010. 202 or Open? Don't know yet. Still mulling that over. Whichever show I choose and whatever division I compete in, I will give it 100 percent. I know I can get back in that zone again and regain that razor-sharp focus. The fire isn't out yet. As the great Rocky Balboa said in the final film of that excellent series, "I still have some stuff left in the basement." ■

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