



# WORKOUT GUIDE

• THOMAS CALKINS •



# Epic Warrior Muscle Workout Guide

**By Thomas Calkins**

*Fitness Coach and Owner/Founder of BuiltFit*

Co-Author: **Brian Dean**

*Master of Science in Nutrition and Registered Dietitian*

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# EPIC WARRIOR MUSCLE WORKOUT GUIDE

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# About The Epic Warrior Muscle Workout Routine

BuiltFit was launched in Jan. 2009 along with the Epic Warrior Muscle in 2010 developed by me, Thomas Calkins. Over the course of nearly a half a decade, I struggled with dozens of muscle building programs that promised much but delivered little.

That's why I decided to find my own method of building muscles-free from marketing hype, empty promises, and hyped up promises.

It took more trial and error than I'd like to admit, but I finally learned what it takes to build muscle and gain some weight. Astonished at the simplicity of my program, I decided to share and help other people looking for similar results.

Personally, I have always been thin as a rail. I was 138 pounds at 5' 10" when I was 18 (1999). I thought I would eventually fill out and put on more weight as I got older but that never happened. I started going to the gym and lifting weights, trying different exercises that never seemed to work. But I didn't give up. I worked out harder, tried a few supplements that were supposed to magically transform my physique, but, of course, that never happened.

I eventually started reading on the internet about the importance of nutrition on building muscle on gaining weight. I also learned what exercises were the best for packing on mass. Once I got my diet down and started to core exercises, I saw the mass replacing the scrawny frame I grew up with. I was amazed how my back and shoulders started to widen and my skinny legs started to not look like twigs. Now, I am around 180 pounds and the strongest I have ever been. I went from a scrawny/weak to strong and ripped...and you can too.

The Epic Warrior Muscle - Workout Guide, along with the nutrition information from the Nutrition Manual, will give you all the tools you need to pack on lean muscle in the fastest possible time.

Note: Everyone is different and responds different to various exercises and diets. It is up to you to track your diet and workout to see what is specifically working for you. Everything I have presented in the book is based what I have read, learned, and experienced through my training.

# Chapter I

## Beginning the Workout Routine

Before we dive into the training program itself, there is plenty of planning and organizing that needs to take place.

### 1. Setting Your Goals

I hope you didn't buy this book just to read it, close, and never act on the information. I'm going to level with you. While this book is written in a breezy, easy to read style, it's not a beach read - it's designed to precede serious action.

And action is infinitely stronger and more focused when you have goals. Goal setting alone separates many struggling gym chumps with those with bodybuilder-like physiques. Lisa Ordonez of Arizona State University has looked into the science of goal setting. She concluded that, "Hundreds of studies conducted in numerous countries and contexts have consistently demonstrated that setting specific, challenging goals can powerfully drive behavior and boost performance."



In fact, one study out of the Netherlands found that setting challenging goals was all that was needed to turn a group of lazy couch potatoes into hardcore gym rats.

But enough theory. Now's the time to grab a pen and paper, take a comfortable seat, shut off distractions, and hammer out your fitness goals.

Obviously the overall goal is to develop your body into your idea of the perfect physique. That's a given. You should keep in mind that physique building has no end except when you achieve perfection –an impossible peak to reach. Thus it's pointless to list a "perfect physique" that as your top goal.

Instead you might consider breaking that idea down into term-specific goals. For example five, three and one year goals, supported by six, three and one month intermediate goals, which are supported even further by weekly goals. The shorter the term of the goal, the more specific and measurable the content of the goal should be. In general, short and measurable goals tend to “stick” much better than vague, long-term goals.

But this doesn't mean that you shouldn't develop some yearly (or even longer) goals. Working with only short-term goals is like living on week-to-week paycheck –it's hard to see the big picture. Keep in mind that the longer-term the goal becomes, the less specific it should be. After all, unless your first name is Nostradamus, you won't know what things are going to look like five years from now.

For instance, once you've determined what is reasonable for your body, set your immediate goals in terms of strength gain over all of your top exercises for a short period of time, let's say one week. Next, set your intermediate goals in terms of pounds of lean muscle mass gained within longer periods of time, like one month. Then, set your long terms goals according to your original idea of what that ideal physique might mean to you or what you'd like to do with it once you have it.

You'll find that your short term and long term goals will work in tandem. The short term goals will get you butt to the gym everyday, while the long term goals will help keep you motivated over the long term. A study out of Pittsburgh School of Medicine found that those that made a contract with themselves before an exercise routine worked out twice as much as those that dove right in.

### **Power of a Goal Statement**

One of the most powerful ways to cement your new goal is to create a goal statement for yourself. A goal statement will help guide you through your quest for your ideal physique. A study out of Pittsburgh School of Medicine found that those that made a contract with themselves before starting an exercise routine worked out twice as much as those that dove right in.

This goal statement will say in first person what your goal is, along with the time frame. Here is an example:

*I will be dedicated to my training program in order for me to gain 18 lbs of muscle in 12 weeks (Jan 12). I am also hoping to get closer to my goal of 2 times bodyweight squats. I will look bigger, be stronger, more attractive, and be more confident in myself.*

*Signed name,  
Current Date*

But don't write this on the back of a napkin and stuff it in a drawer you never open. It's crucial that you put your goal statement where you can see it every single day. A good place would be next to your computer, on your refrigerator, by your bed somewhere, or even in the near your toilet. Read and even say your goal statement out loud to remind you of what you are trying to accomplish. This may seem hokey or new-age, but trust me: simply by looking at this statement often, you'll find yourself on track and with a laser-like focus on your mission.

This is something I do myself (I practice what I preach). It's amazing how much more focused and dedicated you are towards your diet and workout routines when you set goals and look at them consistently.

## 2. Baseline Measurements

Say you've just touched down in Buenos Aires, Brazil. As you take your first few steps out of the airport and your first breathe of the humid air, you see a map. Where's the first place you look? Where you are of course! That's why maps always have a giant red dot indicating your current location –you don't know where you're going unless you know where you are!

By the same token, before you start your new workout routine, how can you tell if your diet or workout program is working if you don't know where you started?

### Here are some of the measurements

- Body Weight
- Body Fat %
- Waist Measurement
- Leg (Quadriceps) Measurement
- Calf Measurement

- Shoulder Measurement
- Chest Measurement
- Bicep Measurement

When it comes to measuring body fat, you can't beat fat calipers. They're inexpensive, and if used right, are fairly accurate in measuring body fat. Also most gyms offer body fat measurements in the way of calipers or a more accurate analysis known as bioelectrical impedance. You can also ask your doctor to measure your body fat.

To measure different body parts, you can use a flexible measuring tape or use a string and then measure the length of the string for the body part.

While it may be tempting, don't track your weight only. Contrary to popular belief, the numbers do lie – if they come from the bathroom scale that is! Much more important than bodyweight is your ratio of muscle to fat, known as body composition. For example, even if your weight doesn't budge after working out and eating right for a few weeks, you may actually be burning off serious amounts of fat while building muscle. You're getting leaner even though your weight stays put.

The difference between just knowing your weight and knowing your measurements

and body fat is the difference between seeing in 3D or 2D. Body measurements will give you a true picture of the muscle you've gained in the way of growth in arm, shoulder, back, and leg size. Your body fat percentage will tell you how much of the size is fat gain.

To maximize accuracy, make sure you record the date and time you measured yourself so you can be consistent with the next time you measure. Why? Because at different times of the day all your measurements could be different. Every time you go for a walk, drink some water, or even go to the bathroom, your measurements change slightly. This is especially true for weight, but all the measurements are in constant flux.



## How Often Should You Measure?

Keeping track of your numbers is like following a stock. Check too often, and you find yourself overreacting, freaking out over slight changes, and making stupid decisions. Don't check enough and you may just find yourself the last person with Pets.com stock. Not cool.

The timing of your measurements depends on what you're measuring. Since weight fluctuates so much during the time of the day and during the week, it's best to measure your weight no more than once a week. Measure your body fat every 2 weeks and body parts every 4 weeks.

Measurement time is a good time to look at before and after photos of yourself. When you see your biceps grow 2" and then look at the picture of your new arms, you'll get an intense jolt to workout harder than ever before.

# Chapter II

## The Workout Philosophy and Hypertrophy

What, you thought philosophy was just for dead Greek guys and as a college major for those looking for a career in fast food? Think again. While the Epic Warrior Muscle “philosophy” has been based on thought, it’s grounded in science.

The basis of the Epic Warrior Muscle workout routine is an intense full body workout routine in minimal amount of time. The goal is to maximize muscle growth, known as hypertrophy, while you’re in the gym.

I can see you there in the back have your hand up. What’s hypertrophy you ask? The technical definition of hypertrophy is the by is the increase in muscle size due to an increase in cellular size in response to a stimulus. Muscle growth.

As you already know, the best way to grow muscles is to resistance train. However, just lifting weights isn’t nearly enough. To maximize hypertrophy, you need to know, love, and understand another semi-technical term: progressive overload.

While progressive overload may sound like the name of a horrendous 80’s hair metal band, it’s actually one of the coolest concepts in exercise physiology. In a nutshell, progressive overload is increasing the work on your muscles over time. In reality, muscle growth is as simple as putting your muscles through a routine that emphasizes progressive overload.

While many other programs will spill gallons of ink talking about which exercises are best or what carbs to eat at bedtime, what makes Epic Warrior Muscle routine work to well is that it cuts out the fact and puts focus on progressive overload like a sniper ready to pull the trigger.

As you’ll see, there are a few ways to tackle progressive overload. You can increase reps, increase weight, or change up the routine. But in general, as long as you’re lifting more than you were the week before, you’re in line with progressive overload.

But before you have to worry about increasing weight and reps, you have to know what types of exercises you should be increasing those weight and reps with. The Epic Warrior Muscle program uses compound exercises to maximize growth in all your muscles.

## 1. Importance of Compound Exercises

No matter where you are, whether in Boston or Bolivia, I can bet that your gym has these two men.

The first, is “the new guy”. He dresses a little funny, looks uncomfortable in his own skin, and gives off the loud and clear impression that he has no idea what he’s doing. And even though we’ve all been there, we can’t help but judge just a little as he does his thing around the gym. At any given time, he’s most likely to be found doing tricep kickbacks or leg extensions.



Every gym also has a “ridiculously jacked guy”. He’s the envy of every scrawny geek at the gym. He spends most of his time bench pressing massive amounts of weight and squatting the equivalent weight of an Overeater’s Anonymous meeting.

When it comes to working muscles to their max, there are two main schools of thought. One group, which I like to call “compound interest-ed”, because they love compound exercises, swear by old school lifts like deadlifts and squats.

The others, called “isolationists”, can’t go a workout without doing tricep kickbacks.

### Who is right?

Without a doubt, the compound interest-ed. Compound exercises, commonly called multijoint exercises, have a laundry list of advantages over isolation lifts. In general, compound exercises allow you to simply pack on more weight (and therefore muscle stimulation) on every single rep. Also, you work more total muscles on a compound lift than an isolation exercise (for example, 80% of your body’s muscles are used in a squat). Perhaps more importantly, compound exercises make you *stronger*. As long as you’re eating right and resting, it’s true that more strength=more muscle. Research published in the

European Journal of Applied Physiology found that compound exercises increased strength significantly more than similar isolation work.

## 2. Free Weights vs. Machine Weights

The exercise machine industry is big business. First Research reports that the manufacturers of treadmills, bicep curl machines, and the like rake in 3 billion big ones every year. How are they making so much money selling machines that do the same exercises you can do without them? Because, through fancy marketing and phony “scientific breakthroughs” they make people think that their fancy gadgets are better than free weights.

But are their claims based on scientific truths or are they a \$3 billion dollar lie?

Sorry to say, despite what your gym’s personal trainer tells you, machines can’t touch free weights –no matter how “advanced” they get.

Here’s why free weights blow machines out of the water:

### Muscle Stimulation

Remember, our goals couldn’t be simpler. Reach hypertrophy by stimulating muscle growth via progressive overload. While you may stimulate your muscles a bit using a machine, it doesn’t hold a candle to the real deal.



Think about a bench press machine. While you may see the motion of the exercise, and perhaps even the weight, as very similar to an actual bench press. However, your muscles see something entirely different.

The primary muscles you work in a bench press, your pecs, triceps, and anterior deltoids don’t feel the same amount of resistance on a machine. The nuts, bolts, and screws in the machine take much of the load off of your muscles –making the lift downright easier.

But the real victim in a machine lift are your supporting muscles. Your forearms, traps, and rotator cuff muscles take a nap during the entire lift. They’re not being lazy –you are. Because the machine determines a strict range of motion, and fully supports the load, your supporting muscles are put out of the job.

Free weights aren't only supported by elite bodybuilders (who always favor free weights), but by science as well.

In a report put together by the National Strength and Conditioning Association stated "...free weights involve free-form which requires you to use more muscles for a given exercise." In general, the more muscles that are involved, the more you'll grow, as our discussion on the merits of compound exercises revealed. You can look at machines, even those that simulate compound movements, as the ultimate form of isolation work.

But what about the target muscles themselves? A landmark study by Steven K Mccaw, PhD and his colleagues at Illinois State University finally picked a winner in the decades-old debate of machines vs. free weights.

In this study, a group of subjects were hooked up to a device that measured electrical stimulation in the muscle –one of the most accurate ways to determine how much a muscle is working. They were then given one of two lifts: an old-school barbell bench press or a machine. Those that lifted actual weight had greater muscle stimulation in the biceps, triceps, shoulder, and chest than those stuck in the machine. The authors concluded that: "The results of this study support the hypothesis that greater muscle activity is present during free weight training than in machine training."

### **Functional Strength**

One of the hottest topics in exercise training is "functional strength". While you do, and should, focus on whatever will give us the most muscle in the least amount of time, if you want strength that you can really use, you should keep an eye on functional strength.

Many bodybuilders used to scoff at lifters who used Swiss balls, worked the crap out of their core, and jumped around doing plyometrics. However, times have changed. The best bodybuilders in the world are now the biggest proponents of developing not just strength for a handful of rigid movements, but for functional strength as well. They claim that functional strength can help improve your strength for all lifts, improve weak points in your physique, and slash injury risk.

Sure enough, free weight exercises are far and away the best approach for building functional strength. The best example of this is the squat. When you have a plate-loaded bar on your neck, it takes your whole body to get your legs bent to parallel and back up again.

On the other hand, a leg extension or leg press, while it may make your quads burn, isn't working your muscles in any sort of functional fashion. The result? Lackluster growth and useless strength.

A study in the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research illustrates the stark difference in functional strength between these two training types. The researchers gave 30 guys one of two training protocols to follow for sixteen weeks –one based on free weight lifts and one almost exclusively using machines. As expected, gains in overall strength were three times higher in the free weight group. But measures of functional strength were a jaw dropping five times higher in the free weight group.

## **Injury**

Getting injured is the muscle building equivalent of falling into debt. Not only does it reverse much of the progress you've worked your butt off to make, but when you do get back into the gym you're working to make up for lost time.

Free weights work all those "little" muscles like elbow and knee stabilizers that you conveniently ignore until they're screaming out to you in writhing pain.

It's a myth that machines reduce your injury risk because they fix your range of motion. While that's undoubtedly the case, that thought leaves out the simple fact that most lifting injuries are from repetitive stress and weak stabilizers – not from blowing out your shoulder on a bench press.

The science bears this out. In the aforementioned Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research study, the group that lifted real weights reported less pain than when they started while the machine group complained of more painful episodes.

## **3. Focus on Form not amount of Weight**

So far, we've established that the best way to gain muscle (hypertrophy) is to lift real weights using compound exercises, while increasing the workload on the muscles (progressive overload).

Does that mean you should be packing on 6 plates on each side of a barbell and start dead lifting? Slow down there Incredible Hulk –there's more to stimulating muscle than indiscriminately throwing weight around the gym like an angry gorilla.

Don't get me wrong, the weight you lift matters –but only if you lift it with proper form. Lifting weight without form is like taking a shortcut through a minefield –you may eventually get to your destination, but it won't be pretty.

Especially because you'll be shunning machines more than a Mechanophobia patient (yes, I just Judo chopped your brain with an actual phobia –look it up), you'll need to pay serious attention to form.

In fact, it can be said that you should put more attention towards form than the amount of weight you can lift.

### **Why does form matter so much?**

Besides the fact that you look like an idiot doing bicep curls looking like a finalist in a limbo contest, form actually gets us to our hypertrophy goals faster. Studies show that people who follow strict form actually stimulate more muscle than those who only care about getting the weight from point A to point B.

How? When you control the lift during both the ascent and descent, you're working your muscles throughout the entire range of motion. Otherwise, the only things doing the work are momentum on the way up and gravity on the way down.

In fact, some studies suggest that more muscle is built on the descent portion of the lift than the "lifting" part. But to control the bar you're putting up (or down, in this case), you need to choose the right weight. Too light, and you're wasting your precious time. Too heavy, and you're wasting your time –and looking like someone who needs a mid-gym session reality check.

The litmus test for appropriate weight is that you can do a four count on the way up and down with the weight –while keeping near picture-perfect form. In general, I find newbie's tend to err to the side of too heavy. So if you're in doubt, go down about 10-20% in weight and see how that works.

Also, the original idea of "good form" actually sprung out of injury prevention. Tired of seeing patients limping into their offices after an overzealous strength training session, doctors and exercise scientists created protocols for lifts that would minimize injury risk. So if you want to spend more time in the gym and less time laid up on the couch with an icepack and a box of Ibuprofen, start making form your #1 priority.

# Chapter III

## The Training Routine

At this point you have a strong knowledge foundation for muscle growth, crystal clear goals, and your measurements in hand. Now it's time to get into the nitty gritty of the training program: your kick butt, take no prisoners, workout routine. Actually, you get two routines for the price of one.

Both routines are full body routines. Both of these routines are not for first time lifters. Do not worry we have a routine coming up that will build your way up to these. Also before diving into both of these routines if you do not already work out regularly, it is a good idea to follow the beginner program to get your body ready.

**There are two different workouts. For new lifters I recommend starting with the 3 day workout split and then moving on to the 4 day workout routine.**

### 3 Day Workout Split

MONDAY			WEDNESDAY		
Legs, Shoulders			Chest, Triceps		
Exercise	Sets	Reps	Exercise	Sets	Reps
Squats	4	8	Flat Bench Press	4	8
Stiff Legged Deadlift	3	8-10	Barbell Incline Press	3	8-10
Overhead Press	4	8-10	Dips	3	Max
DB Side Laterals	3	10-12	Skull Crushers	3	8-10
Leg Extensions	2	10-12	Tricep Pulldowns	3	10-12
Leg Curls	2	10-12	DB Flys	2	10-12

FRIDAY		
Back, Biceps		
Exercise	Sets	Reps
Deadlift	3	5-7
Barbell Rows	3	8-10
Pullups	3	Max
Standing Barbell Curls	3	10-12
Seated DB Curls	3	10-12
Hyperextensions	2	10-12

## 4 Day Workout Split

TUESDAY			MONDAY		
Legs			Chest, Triceps		
Exercise	Sets	Reps	Exercise	Sets	Reps
Squats	4	8	Flat Bench Press	4	8
Stiff Legged Deadlift	3	8-10	Barbell Incline Press	3	8-10
Leg Press	3	8-10	Dips	3	Max
Leg Extensions	2	10-12	Skull Crushers	3	8-10
Leg Curls	2	10-12	Tricep Pulldowns	3	10-12
Calf Raises	4	12	DB Flys	2	10-12
FRIDAY			THURSDAY		
Back			Shoulders, Biceps		
Exercise	Sets	Reps	Exercise	Sets	Reps
Deadlift	3	5-7	Overhead Press	4	8
Barbell Rows	3	8-10	Seated DB Press	3	8-10
Pullups	3	Max	DB Side Laterals	3	10-12
Seated Rows	3	10-12	Standing Barbell Curls	3	10-12
Lat Pulldowns	3	10-12	Seated DB Curls	3	10-12
Hyperextensions	2	10-12	Barbell Shrugs	3	10-12

**\*\*\*Do not go jumping into these right away - please read through the rest of the book!!**

For the full week program please see the workout logs as the exercises change during the course. The number of sets above are the working sets and do not include warm up sets.

This would be the base program and it can be customized by you as you will learn reading on.

# Chapter IV

## Workout Details

You've seen the numbers of sets and reps, but now's the time to expand on them. After reading this, you'll finally know the answers to age old questions that have bounced around weight rooms since the days of Arnold and Yates like "how many sets should I do?", how many reps are best", and "should I change my routine or stick to it?"

### 1. What About Sets and Reps?

You see that I've set an ideal rep range and set amount for you. Even lifting veterans mix up "reps" and "sets" so let's get our definitions down pat now.

Reps are the number of times you perform the lift movement. For squat, this would be the motion of going down and then back up. This would be one rep. So when you see 8-10 reps, this means do the movement 8-10 times. Easy, right?

A set is how many times you are going to be doing those 8-10 reps. So once you complete the 10 reps, you would have completed the first set. You would then rest and complete another set. The exercise is complete after you have completed all the sets.

You may wonder how I came up with this rep and set range. Why 3 sets, why 10 reps? These numbers aren't arbitrary to my lucky lottery numbers. The 8-12 rep range (except for heavy deadlifts) and 2-4 sets per exercise are based on what science says works best, what many experts agree on, and based on my personal experience.

For example, The American College of Sports Medicine, the leading scientific body of all things fitness, recommends a similar rep range and set number that I do.

In reality there is no one best rep range as everyone's body responds differently. You also do not want continue doing the same reps your whole life. It is good to mix up your routines every 3 months or so by decreasing the reps with lower weight or doing more reps on some sets.

## 2. Constant Weight For Each Set

You may have heard concepts like “pyramiding”, “reverse pyramiding”, and other strange terms tied to how much you should lift. Ignore it.

Increasing, decreasing, or suddenly changing weight doesn’t mesh well into our ultimate goal: progressive overload. For all sets, the weight should remain constant. This does not include any warm-up sets. Simple as that.

There is nothing wrong with pyramiding and other fancy rep schemes, but in this program keep it at a constant weight during your work sets.

Please note that your warmup set weights can vary in weight.

## 3. Progressing Each Workout

Progressive overload isn’t bloody likely if you waltz into the gym and “try to” or “think” you lift more than last time you were there. It requires a bit of planning and number crunching, although you won’t need to hire a CPA to plan your next workout.

All you really need to do is remember to write down the exact sets, reps, weights you do for each exercise after your workouts. This will help you keep track of your progress and adjust your workout accordingly. Either write this down on a notebook during your workout or, if you have a good memory, write it down when you get home. Don’t be lazy and skip this step. You have nothing to do between sets except admire your biceps in the mirror anyway, so take the 7 seconds to write down what you accomplished. (As a side note, your tattered notebook will become one of your favorite possessions, as you look at where you started and where you get years later).

After you’ve finished your first week of lifting, you’ll have your first go at real world progressive overload. The only way to achieve progressive overload is to add volume to your workouts in the form of more weight or more reps than your previous workout. For some exercises like bicep curls, it may be hard to increase weight that often. You just need to increase the overall reps. If your last workout you did 4 sets of 9 reps (36 total reps) for curls try to aim for a least for a total of 37 reps. Maybe you can do 2 sets of 10 and 2 sets of 9 this time. This is still more volume than your previous week and it is steady progress.

For other exercises, like squats, you can easily add 10 or even 20 lbs. between your first few workouts as your strength builds. Of course, this kind of progress won't last (if it does, order your Superman tights from Amazon), but you should be adding sets and/or reps to every workout. No exceptions.

This my friends, the determined and deliberate dedication to increasing volume, is one of the “secrets” that the elite use to grow and grow like mold on a humid day.

## **4. When to Increase the Weight Instead of Increasing the Reps**

As you can see in the workout plan above, there's a set and rep range for each exercise.

For example, for squats, you should do 4 sets of 8 reps. Once you are able to do 8 reps for the 4 sets with perfect form, you should increase the weight. You might only do 4 sets of 7 your next time (it happens), but work your way back up to 4 sets of 10 and increase the weight again. Make sure you increase the weight just enough so you can still do the required reps with solid form.

How much, of course, depends on the lift. Squats you can probably add a 5 to 10 lb. plate on each side of the barbell every single week, while something like dumbbell curls you'll be lucky to add weight on a monthly basis.

This may seem like a pain, and admittedly, it's a helluva lot easier to haphazardly lift the same weights you always have. But remember that if you are not increasing either the reps or weight each week, then you will not build any new muscle or increase your strength. If you do, you will.

If you are unable to increase the reps from week from week to week, what do you do? The most likely culprit is your diet. If you're still subsisting on various varieties of Doritos or skimping on high quality protein, your muscles physically can't recover between sessions. Be sure to follow the advice in the Nutrition Manual and follow the Nutrition Logs.

There's also the possibility that you're not getting enough rest, both in terms of time and hours of sleep –something we'll tackle in a later section.

## 5. Warm-up Sets

Have you ever owned a clunker and tried to start her up on a freezing February morning? If so, you probably nearly froze as you waited for your iced chariot to warm up before you stepped on the gas.

The thing is, when you walk into the gym, you're as cold as a 1978 VW Beetle in Flint Michigan. Your muscles, joints, and nervous system are cold as ice. Sure, you can still lift a decent amount of weight and skip your warm-up, but you're a) multiplying your risk of injury and b) limiting the amount of weight you can put up.

Warming up sets help bring lubricating synovial fluid into your vulnerable joint and ligaments and gives a wake up call to your napping nervous system.

Make sure you do 2 warm up sets for each muscle group before starting the exercises. Make sure to do warm-ups for multijoint, heavy lifts like deadlift, squats, bench press, and overhead press. Be sure not to poop yourself out on your warm up sets. In general, warm-ups are should be a light weight, about 50% of what you usually lift, for about 10 reps per set.

## 6. Ideal Rest Between Sets

One of the most important parts of your gym sessions is when you're not lifting anything at all. No, I'm not talking about ogling at the blonde squatting next to you, I mean your between set rest period.

In general, the size of the rest period is relative to the size of the muscles worked. Let me explain. Let's say you just finished off a mean set of deadlifts, which worked enormous muscles like your lats and hamstrings. Your body needs about 90-120 seconds to bounce back and recharge those sizeable bad boys.

On the other hand, if you polished off a set of bicep curls, your body doesn't need as much time to get those relatively smaller muscles back in action. For lifts like these, rest about 60 seconds.

Also, if you're just starting out, you may need 90 seconds just to catch your breath. As your overall fitness level improves, drop this down to 60 for small muscle lifts and 90-120 for multijoint lifts.

## 7. Proper Breathing During Exercise

Like yoga, your breath is an essential part of lifting. Unlike yoga however, your breathing isn't to align chakras or other nonsense, but to align your core and spine for a proper lift.

For all lifts, you should inhale during the descent or lowering of the weight (or put another way, the "easy" part of the lift), and exhale when you're exerting effort. Firstly, this breathing regimen makes sure you're actually breathing! I see so many guys with faces redder than a ripe tomato holding their breath for 20 or 30 seconds. It's not healthy and it actually doesn't help you lift.

Exhaling while you're exerting effort helps automatically tone your core and straighten your spine to protect your injury-prone lower back.

## 8. Rest and Recovery Between Workouts

Getting adequate amount of rest between each workout is critical for the growth and recovery of your muscle. Believe it or not, no matter what kind what of bulge you get from "the pump", your muscles actually grow during the days after your gym session is over.

Besides eating right, sleep is something that all would-be muscle builders need to put on their radar screen. You should be getting at least 7 hours of sleep a night, with a goal of 9 hours of shuteye per night. Studies show that all-important growth hormone is pumped out only during sleep –it's like a natural version of steroids! Not only will sleep help you're muscles grow between sessions, but you'll have more energy and vigor the next time you're lifting.

## 9. Alternating Exercises

If you rather read a phone book than hit the gym, your growth has leveled off, and you're strength gains have hit a wall, then it's probably time to switch up the exercises you've been doing.

Changing up your exercises on a monthly bases keeps you fresh, stimulates your muscles in new ways, and busts through strength plateaus.

The base workout routine above is the one I used to pack on a bunch of muscle my first time. That would be my starting routine.

As you will see in the workout logs some of your exercises change about every month so your workouts do not get dull and you can continue to stimulate your muscle.

Also as you continue to workout - you might want to customize your workout for your strengths and weaknesses. The following chart below is the exercises I would recommend to substitute with the base program.

<b>Starting Exercise</b>	<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>
<b>Legs</b>		
Squats	Front Squats	Wide/Narrow Squats
Stiff Legged Deadlift	Barbell Lunges	DB Lunges
Leg Press	Hack Squats	
Leg Extensions		
Lying Leg Curls	Seated Leg Curls	
Standing Calf Raises	Seated Calf Raises	Leg Press Calf Raises
<b>Back</b>		
Deadlift	Sumo Deadlift	
Barbell Rows	DB Rows	Yates Rows
Pullups	Chinups	BTN Pullups
Seated Rows	T-bar Rows	
Lat Pulldowns	Underhand Pulldowns	
Hyperextensions	Good Mornings	
<b>Chest, Triceps</b>		
Flat Bench Press	Flat DB Press	
Barbell Incline Press	Incline DB Press	Barbell Decline Press
Dips		
Skull Crushers	Overhead DB Extensions	
Tricep Pushdowns	Close-grip Bench Press	
Flys	Incline Flys	Pullovers
<b>Shoulders, Biceps</b>		
Overhead Press	Seated Military Press	
Seated DB Press	Arnold Presses	
DB Lateral Raises	DB Front Raises	
Standing Barbell Curls	Preacher Curls	Standing DB Curls
Seated DB Curls	Incline DB Curls	Concentration Curls
Barbell Shrugs	DB Shrugs	Upright Rows

## **10. Beginner Workout and Initial Training Weeks**

I know you're more excited than a hippie on his way to a Phish concert to start the Epic Warrior Muscle program. However, jumping into this program headfirst is a surefire way to get hurt, lift too heavy, and feel soreness you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy.

### **New Lifters and Beginners**

I recommend beginners follow the Beginner Workout until their bodies get adjusted and they are doing the correct form on all of exercises. View the exercise database for info, pics, and videos on how perform the exercises.

After warmup weeks please start with the 3 day a week workout that is modified for less sets and reps.

### **Initial Weeks for Other Lifters**

If you have not been working out recently but are familiar with all the exercises and consider yourself at least an intermediate lifter then I recommended a week or two of the beginner program before diving into the main program. Warm-up weeks help you learn form and commit them to muscle memory while using lighter weights.

Trust me you are going to be so sore and it will be hard to walk all week if you go full steam into the main program.

See the table below for the Beginner Program and Warm-up Weeks

MONDAY			WEDNESDAY		
Legs, Shoulders			Chest, Triceps		
Exercise	Sets	Reps	Exercise	Sets	Reps
Squats	2	8	Flat Bench Press	2	8
Stiff Legged Deadlift	2	10	Barbell Incline Press	2	8
Overhead Press	2	8	Dips	1	Max
DB Side Laterals	2	10	Skull Crushers	2	8
Leg Extensions	2	10	Tricep Pulldowns	2	10

FRIDAY		
Back, Biceps		
Exercise	Sets	Reps
Deadlift	1	5
Barbell Rows	2	8-10
Pullups	2	Max
Standing Barbell Curls	2	10-12

You can view the full beginner program in the workout logs.

## 12. Cardio

Do cardio either between workouts or after each workout. Limit it to 10-20 minutes, maybe 2 days a week.

Cardio would be anything that gets your heart rate elevated an extended period of time. Heck, this might be playing a game of basketball or just walking around the block.

Remember the more cardio you do, the more calories you are going to have to consume to offset the calories burned.

# Chapter V

## Seeing Results

You might get a rush from squatting your bodyweight for the first time, but you and I both know you're here for one thing: results.

Here are some keys to think about to ensure you reach your goals get the most of you your training program:

- Did you set your goals and write them down?
- Are you recording what you eat each day and following the diet you planned?
- Are you adding weight or reps to exercises each week?
- Are you getting plenty of rest?
- Are you drinking plenty of water?
- Are you performing the exercises properly?
- Are you tracking your results and modifying your diet accordingly?
- Did you read the Epic Warrior Muscle - Nutrition Manual and are you following the Nutrition Logs
- Are you following the Workout Logs?

# Chapter VI

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What about doing Cardio?**

Good question. Contrary to what many “hard gainers” say, you should do some cardio even if you are just looking to gain weight and build muscle. However, I would cap this at no more than twice a week at the end of your workouts. Just do about 20 minutes of light cardio on a stationary bike, treadmill, or elliptical.

Essentially, doing cardio is up to you and your goals. For example, if you’re looking to trim some fat, you may want to do it 3 times a week for about 30 minutes.

### **Can I do this program if I am looking to lose weight?**

This program can be used to gain weight or lose weight –or for doing both at once. As long as you’re following this program and eating right using the Epic Warrior Muscle principles, you’ll find fat flying off of you.

However, if you’re aiming to drop some pounds, I would add more cardio. Try to do at least 3 days of cardio a week for 30-40 minutes. Cardio would involve anything that can elevate your heart rate for at least 30 minutes straight. The treadmill, stationary bike, stair climber, and elliptical machine are all great choices at the gym for cardio.

### **Can I do this workout routine at any age?**

Whether you’re 18 or 80, this routine is for you. It’s based on human muscle physiology, which doesn’t change much as we age. However, it’s always good to consult a doctor if you are unsure if a workout routine or diet is good for your individual conditions.

### **Is this program good for women?**

Woman can benefit from this program too. Contrary to popular belief, you will not get big and bulky looking by lifting weights.

### **Help, I cannot do a pullup?**

Demi Moore may have done a dozen of them in GI Jane, but in reality, pullups are *hard*!

There are a few options for those of you who cannot do a regular pull-up:

Do underhanded pull-ups – these are easier to do than overhand pull-ups

Have someone support you – have someone spot you by holding your shins and pushing you up.

Use a supported pull up machine- If you have a gym that has these

Do negative pull-ups – start from the top position and slowly lower yourself.

### **Help the barbell is too heavy for some exercises like squat, bench press, and overhead press?**

Actually, the bar isn't too heavy. But if your form is off, it can make it difficult to lift it properly.

But if your form is correct and you are still having issues, try switching to dumbbells until you can safely lift the barbell with correct form.

### **What is the ideal length of workouts?**

Keep workouts under 50 minutes to maximize muscle growth. If you are incorporating more cardio in your workout then it might be a little longer than this.

### **Why 6-10 reps on exercises?**

6-10 reps range is ideal for the combination of increasing strength and building muscle.

### **Will this workout routine make me stronger?**

With a proper diet and increasing either your reps or weight each week you will become stronger every week.

### **Should I include ab work?**

Your abs will be worked indirectly on most compound lifts so you do not have to do direct ab work. If you still want to work your abs directly, you can do 1-2 exercises at the end of your workouts, maybe twice a week.

Ab Crunches, Leg Raises, Cable Crunches, and Reverse Crunches are all great exercises for building your abs.

### **How long to see results from the program?**

Within a few weeks you will begin seeing some stark results, but after 3 months you should see enormous differences in your before and after pictures and measurements. Remember, consistency in your training and diet is the key to achieving your goals.

### **Help I am skinny and want to gain weight – Is this program for me?**

This workout program is perfect for you. I was in the same position so I know it can work for you if you're are dedicated. There's also a lot of information out there for those needing to gain weight.

### **I am not gaining weight please help?**

You're not eating enough! Eat more, it's that simple. Make sure you are writing down your daily calories and breakdown of foods for each meal. Keep increasing your calories until you begin to gain weight.

### **I have never done squats or deadlift before, what weight to start with?**

Start with just the bar. Learn to do the correct form before adding weight -but be sure to add weight slowly. It's best to a picture or video of your form and compare it to the exercise demonstrations on built fit or ask someone in the forum if you are doing it right.

### **Can I add sets?**

The current workout program has enough volume for you to build muscle. Adding sets will do nothing but over train your body. Remember your diet is 80% of how much muscle you will gain, so if you're not seeing results, put more effort into your diet, not your workouts.

### **Should I pyramid sets?**

Please stick with straight sets for at least 3-4 months. You can begin varying your workout more once you start making progress and become a more advanced lifter.

### **Can I increase the rest between sets?**

If you are having trouble completed the number of reps because your muscles are tired from the previous set, then you might want to add some time between sets.

### **Can I use the smith machine for squats?**

While the Smith Machine is tempting, stick with barbell squats. They are more effective. They also help your balance and stability.

## **I workout by myself - Is this safe?**

Yes it is safe. I work out by myself most of the time. Ask anyone at the gym to help spot you on lifts and they will be more than glad to.

## **Finding a suitable gym**

Obviously, you need a gym if you want to follow this program. When evaluating a new gym, keep an eye out for:

- Free weights
- Power rack or squat rack
- Flat and incline benches (or adjustable bench)
- Place to do deadlift – a power rack works fine
- Dumbbells

Gyms like Bally's, Gold's Gym, 24 Hour Fitness, and other major gyms will have the equipment you need. Smaller, community gyms might not have the free weights and power rack, but tend to be cheaper.

## **What about building a home gym?**

You can easily build a home gym to do most of the exercises. The main equipment you will need is a power rack, free weight set, and an adjustable bench.

# Chapter VII

## Closing Thoughts

Could it really be that simple? Is building a muscular frame as simple as two words: “Progressive Overload”.

Yes and no. While progressive overload is the stimulus that makes your muscles grow, it won’t happen without another important word: “dedication”.

No, I’m not going to lecture you about “sticking to your goals” and “the value of hard work” –I’m not a 1950’s era TV Dad. Dedication isn’t something you can get from a website, book, or even a loved one. It’s something you get from inside yourself.

But dedication isn’t a formless entity that some people have and some people don’t. This program, along with building muscle, builds dedication as well. Your written goals, personal contract, and measurements will fuel your dedication. But, as you grow and watch your body metamorphosis in the mirror, the dedication will take care of itself.

Thanks for checking out my ebook, I hope you found it useful.

Sincerely,  
*Thomas Calkins*

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