

## Calf Specialization

By

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As with biceps, triceps, chest, back, abs, delts, thighs; every body part there is, there are numerous programs and techniques for developing them. This is true also for calves. Same old line I always use; “what works for one, may not work for another.” Well, here is a calf specialization program worth trying if you need to add an inch or so to your lower legs. I’ve had some good results from this program and you might also. You will need to give it four weeks in order to determine if you are going to get results and in any event, your efforts will not go un-rewarded. If after that length of time you feel you are making progress, then naturally, keep going.

Many times I have stated, and some agree while others do not; “you are either blessed with good calf muscles or you are not.” “There is not a great deal you can do about it.” I have seen some people who have never lifted a weight in their lives walk around with some of the largest and well shaped calf muscles you could find on any Mr. Olympia. At the same time, I have seen seasoned professional bodybuilders that are weak in the calf department. Genetics plays a major role here and although you can improve on any situation, there are limits. Just don’t be quick to blame poor calf development on your genetics. I have seen some who have done just that when in reality, their weak calf development was more a result from being lazy than genetics.

I have never been a big supporter of doing weighted twenty or thirty reps for calf development. I have always been, and even written many times, about keeping the reps in the ten to fifteen range, sometimes even less. This of course is with heavy weights. Now here is a twist but it must be followed as outlined and you cannot make any changes to the routine. You will work your calves four days per week. Two heavy days and two light

days and you must leave sufficient time between the days for recovery. This is why I say you cannot alter this program, either exercises or days prescribed.

Start each movement by standing on a block of wood at least as high as a 2 x 4. Place your feet so that only your toes and the ball of your feet are on the block. Point your toes slightly outward. Your feet should be spaced about 10 to 12 inches from center of big toe to center of big toe. It is best if you do not wear any shoes. Bare foot is the preferred method. If you do wear shoes make certain they have very flexible soles. Stiff shoes have to go. You must stretch all the way down on each rep and you must come all the way up on your toes. Concentrate on placing your weight on your big toe and the toe next to your big toe, contract fully at the top. Do this on each rep of every set for every exercise outlined. THESE INSTRUCTIONS ARE A MUST!

On Monday and Thursday you will use heavy weights and on Tuesdays and Fridays you will use bodyweight only. No weights at all. On Tuesdays and Fridays with body weight only, you will perform standing calf raise in the same position, on the same block, using the same technique as you apply on Mondays. Only on Tuesdays and Fridays, using bodyweight only, you are to perform 100 reps of standing calf raises. This will be extremely difficult to do at the beginning so I suggest the following method.

Start by performing four sets of twenty-five reps with not more than 30 seconds rest between sets. Work up to doing two sets of fifty reps. Finally try for one set of 100 reps. If you can do two sets of fifty reps you can be proud. It is essential that you perform these reps properly. That means no “bouncing” up and down. Do not perform them ultra fast nor ultra slow. You must get a full stretch at the bottom and a full contraction at the top.

I also suggest you massage your calves well after each workout. This will not only help with the soreness that is sure to come, it will help invigorate the calf muscle with blood and help produce gains. If you do not have access to a massage therapist, use

a hand held massager. If you do not have one you can use a rough towel and rub your calves briskly for several minutes after each session.

Monday:

Standing Calf Raise. Use either a regular standing calf machine or a smith machine. Perform five sets using the maximum weight you can use to perform the sets and reps correctly.

1 x 15, 1 x 12, 1 x 10, 1 x 8, 1 x 6.

Tuesday:

Bodyweight only standing calf raises. 100 reps.

Thursday:

Seated Calf Raises. Perform five sets using the maximum weight you can use in performing the movement correctly. If you do not have access to a seated calf machine, perform standing calf raises as performed on Mondays.

1 x 15, 1 x 12, 1 x 10, 1 x 8, 1 x 6.

Friday:

Bodyweight only standing calf raises. 100 reps.

This is an extremely difficult exercise routine for the calves and will produce a great amount of soreness at the start regardless of how advanced you are in your training. Be prepared, I warned you!

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