

Coming Down to Go Up

By

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Nobody begins their journey in bodybuilding simply by picking up a weight and setting the goal of keeping the same poundage throughout their journey. The result would be minimal progress at the outset followed very quickly by zero progress as time went on. The entire process of working out is based on the principle of increasing the resistance or workload or a combination of both over a given period of time. Since the human body adapts quickly to any form of increased demands, one must constantly increase the load of work on the muscles of the body in order to continue improving and advancing.

This basic theory brings with it a load of problems for the bodybuilder, novice as well as advanced. The one problem faced more than any other is that of performing movements with too much weight. This is often done out of enthusiasm for ones quest to lift heavier weights - increasing resistance. Too much is added too fast. This leads one to obtaining only partial results from an exercise.

Adding additional resistance on a regular planned basis is an absolute necessity however; most trainees add too much weight too fast. The purpose of adding resistance is to place more stress on the muscle being worked. If one places too much stress on a muscle, more than the muscle can properly handle, the stress is then spread to other connective and secondary muscles, as well as the joints. All of which actually reduces the benefit of the movement itself. Spreading the workload out over more than one muscle group should be used when employing compound movements such as the bench press but not when one is specifically targeting a muscle like the biceps.

The bench press is a compound movement, used for development of the pectorals muscles of the chest. The movement places stress on the pec's, triceps, and frontal delts. Performing the bench press you cannot really isolate the pec muscles themselves. Dumbbell flyes on the other hand is the main isolation movement used to develop the pecs. Dumbbell flyes allows one to use the pec muscles with minimal use of other muscle groups, triceps and frontal delts.

Far too often one strives to use more weight than they can handle properly in a lift. Take for another example the standing barbell curl for the biceps. Of all movements this one exercise seems to be the recipient of sloppy form due to the use of excessive poundage than any other. Even with the use of a Preacher Bench, or other isolation apparatus, the vast majority of trainee's use too much weight. This forces other muscles to perform the majority of the work that was intended for the biceps. In turn this makes the movement less than productive for increasing the size of the biceps.

Its true one needs to consistently add resistance through one form or another in order to increase the load of work the muscle performs but, when you add so much weight that you are unable to perform the movement properly you are cheating yourself of the benefits altogether. It would not be uncommon for someone to only get maybe 20% of available benefit from a movement simply because they are using a weight that is too heavy and thus performing the movement incorrectly.

In saying this I am not advocating abandoning the use of cheating movements. Cheating movements have their place in time for everyone. Cheating is a valuable method that should be used from time to time but should not be used each workout. If used as the one and only principal, complete development will never be achieved. Overloading, using heavier weights that do not permit strict form is also a principle that is valuable from time to time but again, this should

not be used for extended periods of time. You have to use your head. Think about your training.

The reality is this; if you are young, no matter what caution is given, you are still going to attempt working with poundage's that are too heavy. Doing so consistently will definitely result in injury and problems later in life. Again, you have been warned! If you are older, excessive weights will tear at your joints and you'll suffer needlessly. All for nothing as an older less experienced trainee will not receive benefits from overloading. If you are a "comeback" seasoned bodybuilder, returning from an extended absence from the iron, you will also find injury and slow progress if you load up too much too fast.

Although we have established many times the truthful statement that no two people are alike, a general rule of thumb does seem to surface as acceptable. If you desire to add muscle size, reps in the 8 to 12 range need to be used. For strength and power reps in the 3 to 6 range should be applied. Not hard and fast but pretty close to it, these stated rep ranges have proven successful for a great many.

Common sense... how do you get the point across! You have to increase the poundage slowly while performing the movements correctly, and work out consistently in order to make progress. Think of coming down in the amount of weight you are using in each movement in order to perform the exercise in good form and directly work the muscles the exercises were intended for. Focus on the muscles. You may just discover you will have to come down in weight in order to go up in progress. All this to say... Train Smart!

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