

From Train 21 Rest 7 To 4 And 1

by

Alan Palmieri

Vince Gironda had a routine he called “Train 21 Rest 7” in which you would workout for 21 straight days and then rest for 7 days. The idea was to tax the muscles intensely followed by the time necessary to permit them to recuperate. Not a bad approach and also a novel way of inserting change into a routine. Perhaps one of the best aspects is the fact you can plan for a layoff. If you are going to be out of town on business, maybe taking a week’s vacation or, maybe you just need a week to get some projects completed. A week off from training may not be bad, provided it is a planned layoff.

Having used this method numerous times over the years I can attest to it’s unique and positive effect on the system. Those sincere with training do not have a problem getting back to training after the one week layoff. Those who are not so dedicated may use the week off as an excuse to keep them from returning to their workouts. After all, for a great many, exercising is one of the hardest habits to form and one of the easiest to break.

The week off will not cause you to lose size or strength, especially if you are younger. The fact is you may discover you actually gain size and strength due to the week’s layoff. I believe the rest allows for full recovery, mentally, emotionally, and physically. It provides time for your system to recharge and even stockpile some in reserve.

I altered the original Train 21 Rest 7 routine of Vince’s to suit my personal needs, my recuperative abilities, and my systems responsive nature. Even though Vince’s

original routine worked well for me, I can't keep from experimenting and modifying things in an effort to improve. Over the years, I critiqued almost everything, even my own routines and programs; it's a growing and learning process. Anyone who knows me or reads and follows my material knows, I challenge, test, experiment, and use that which I state. I do not make claims on things I just read or hear about and never simply take someone's point of view. I developed a routine I call 4 And 1. It stands for a routine in which you will train for four weeks and take one week off. Is there a tremendous difference between the two routines?

Let me put it this way. No matter what exercise you are performing, simply moving the spacing or position of your hands just slightly, even over or in one inch, makes a big difference. Well, I have come to find the same with various routines. Small changes and modifications here and there seem to make a difference. Will the 4 And 1 work better for you than the Train 21 Rest 7 routine? I don't know and you won't either until you give it a try. I know some who received no benefit at all on the Train 21 Rest 7 program but did on the 4 And 1 and visa versa. Here again, everyone is different.

It seems to me that I need to insert a statement in everything I write, something along the lines: *Routines are to be followed for the period of time they produce results and then changed.* Continually I receive inquiries from people indicating they follow a routine for months on end. I have always advocated the changing of routines on a regular basis. It only makes sense and provides continual results. How often depends on the individual, some can follow the same routine for a year gaining benefit the entire time while others need to alter their workout every third or fourth session. Long distance via email, phone, fax, or mail, does not provide the means for which I or anyone else can properly advise a person in this matter.

The 4 And 1 routine, as previously stated, is based on Vince Gironda's Train 21 Rest 7 program. You are to train 4 weeks in a row then take 1 week off. Simple short and sweet, nothing complicated. Each body part is worked twice per week in an alternate fashion. The routine listed is one I have followed with a good amount of success.

Monday: Chest – Triceps – Calves

1. Incline Dumbbell Press 5 x 8
2. Flat Bench Dumbbell Flyes 5 x 10
3. Lying Triceps Extensions 5 x 8
4. One Arm Dumbbell Triceps Extensions 5 x 8
5. Standing Calf Raises 6 x 10

Tuesday: Back – Rear Delts – Biceps

1. Bent Over Barbell Row 5 x 8
2. One Arm Dumbbell Row 5 x 8
3. Seated Bent Over Lateral Raises 5 x 10
4. Barbell Body Drag Curl 5 x 8
5. Incline Dumbbell Curl 3 x 10

Wednesday: Thighs – Delts - Abs

1. Front Squats 5 x 8
2. Leg Extensions 5 x 10
3. Leg Curl 4 x 10
4. Standing Dumbbell Press 5 x 8
5. Standing One Arm Side Laterals 4 x 10
6. Crunches 3 x 20
7. Reverse Crunches 3 x 30

Thursday: Chest – Triceps – Calves

1. Incline Barbell Press 4 x 15
2. Triceps Press Downs 4 x 12
3. Seated Calf Raises 4 x 12

Friday: Back – Biceps – Hams

1. Chins or Pulldowns 4 x 12
2. Seated Dumbbell Curls 4 x 10

3. Stiff Leg Deadlifts 3 x 15

Saturday: Thighs – Delts - Forearms - Abs

1. Sissy Squats 5 x 15
2. Seated Side Lateral Raises 4 x 12
3. Reverse Curls 5 x 10
4. Wrist Curls 5 x 10
5. Crunches 3 x 20
6. Reverse Crunches 3 x 20

Sunday: Off

Monday: Repeat the cycle.

Relaying my personal experiences with the 4 And 1 routine; after three days off I begin to feel my skin tighten, almost the exact same feeling one gets from a good pump. I seem to have an overall healthier feeling. I also feel much stronger and eager to train, as if I can't wait to get back to training. This feeling must be curbed, if you do train you are not following the routine and you will definitely reduce the results you may otherwise discover from the 4 And 1 routine. As far as measurements go, I no longer pay any attention to measurements but to the best of my knowledge, when I used this routine years ago, I did make some pretty good gains. If you are inclined to take measurements, make certain you do not measure at the end of the fourth workout week. Wait until after your week off and take your measurements the day you begin to workout again because the week off is part of the routine, it's during that week your recuperative process takes place and actually accounts for your gains.

Some may discover real gains in muscle size, others in definition, and some in endurance, energy or simply just an overall feeling of well-being. In any case, if followed properly, almost everyone receives a benefit from the 4 And 1 routine. The benefit

depends on the individual. I honestly believe once followed, most people will come back to it either immediately after their week off or sometime in the near future.

After one full week off, you can either follow the same routine or select another one. Some will be able to pick up with the same intensity and poundage used prior to the week off, others may need to take the first week back as a warm-up period and break in more gradually. Age, experience level, and condition all play an important part in the process and in how you return after the week off. In any case, the first week back needs to be looked upon as a warm-up and the second week considered as the first week back to your workout.

© Copyright 2004 Alan Palmieri