

# **Increase The Intensity Level**

**by**

**Alan Palmieri**

Anyone who has even just one week of training under their belt knows that intensity needs to be increased in order to continually coax the muscles into growth. It is also a well-known fact several methods are available to accomplish this task. You can add resistance by increasing the poundage used in an exercise, you can reduce the rest time between sets, you can isolate the muscle being worked, etc. All of these methods work and are unchallenged in their useful place in bodybuilding.

One of the main problems with increasing the intensity level of a workout is the lowering of ones energy level. As you increase the intensity – it usually drains more of your energy and, if not careful, you may run out of steam before your workout is completed. This is not an uncommon problem and one a great many trainees face. Near the end of a workout they are just going through the motions with no mental focus and greatly decreased muscle contraction.

When you increase the intensity level you run a real risk of over-training not only the muscle you are working but also your entire system including the nervous system. Over-training produces a severe shock to the system and results in shutting down your muscles ability to respond, as they should. The result is decreased gains and progress, rapid heartbeat, increase in blood pressure, nervousness, a tired feeling and lowering of the immune system. All things no bodybuilder wants or can stand for in their training program.

As a natural bodybuilder, several years back, I experimented with a different concept, something that would help add size to my frame. I wanted to accomplish three things:

1. Increase my intensity level to the highest point I possibly could.
2. Reduce the amount of time I was working out at any given period of time.
3. Have more energy for each workout.

Having been involved in bodybuilding for so many years, I realized a lot of others had the same need and desire I did. I carefully experimented with so many different routines, programs, exercises, methods, ideas, and concepts it gives me a headache just to think about it. Finally I came up with something I thought would do just what I wanted it to. First I would have to experiment to see if it would work. Well believe me, it does work. The only draw back is the time factor. You see, instead of one workout per day you break your workouts into two, three or even four different times per day. This makes it difficult for many, depending on their jobs and schedules. It also makes it difficult if you do not have any equipment at home and must do all of your training in a gym. Still, some adjustments can be made and in doing so, most will be able to adjust and fit the program into their schedule and routine.

If you are unable to train three or four times a day, cut it back to at least two times a day and combine the exercises. Still, you are cutting back the length of time you are training at any one given point in time. This will provide you with more energy to increase the intensity of each workout but admittedly, you will feel like all you are doing is working out. You will be surprised how fast the time goes between workouts.

I know this type of split training has been around for years. With the pros of today it is even more popular. All a lot of them have to do is eat, sleep, and train. I am not as fortunate – never have been - and don't know many who really can afford to do it that way. When I followed the double or triple split system, I trained both at a commercial gym and at home. I set up my routine so I could go through part of my workout in the morning before leaving my house for work, another part during lunch, and the third workout in the evening at the gym. It took some adjusting and planning but worked to my satisfaction.

I would not recommend this routine be followed for an extended period of time. As with most of my suggestions, about six weeks on any one given program and then change should be incorporated not only to help stimulate results but also to curb the boredom both the mind and body so quickly come to face when following the same workout.

I am also not going to try and outline times of day or give examples such as... “If you go to work at 7:00 am then get up an hour earlier from what you have been, etc., etc.” You can figure that out and make whatever adjustments are necessary for you. Just be conscious of the fact you should allow for at least 3 to 4 hours in-between each session. I am also not including any suggestions on abs because this is a size-building program and you should conserve your energy for movements designed for building size. If you feel you want to incorporate abs in this routine, add them on days you are not training biceps. What would I suggest and how many sets and reps. Well, I already stated I purposely did not include abs in this routine so if you feel compelled to do them anyway, do what you want to. How’s that for a smart response!

Here is an example of a double split routine I followed employing two and three workouts per day. Almost immediately I discovered more energy and the ability to vastly increase the intensity of my workout. Knowing, for example that on Mondays I would only do Incline Dumbbell Presses for chest; I was able to increase the poundage and cut the rest between sets dramatically. The increase in poundage and reduction in rest progressed with each workout. Whether or not you realize it, if you have four, five, six or more prime movements to do in a single workout, you subconsciously hold back so that you will have enough energy and strength to make it through the workout. Which by the way may take an hour or longer.

Using the Monday workout I just mentioned, it may only take you fifteen to twenty minutes to perform Incline Dumbbell Presses for the chest. Consider not only the time you save but the intensity you can apply knowing that is your only movement for that workout.

Although I used several different exercise combinations while on this routine, here is an outline of one I really liked.

Monday: Chest – Triceps

1. Incline Dumbbell Press 6 x 8      1<sup>st</sup> Workout of the day
2. Flat Dumbbell Flyes 6 x 10      2<sup>nd</sup> Workout of the day
3. Decline Tricep Press 6 x 8      3<sup>rd</sup> Workout of the day

Tuesday: Back – Biceps

1. Chins 6 x Max      1<sup>st</sup> Workout of the day
2. Bent Over Barbell Row 6 x 8      2<sup>nd</sup> Workout of the day
3. Incline Dumbbell Curl 6 x 8      3<sup>rd</sup> Workout of the day

Wednesday: Shoulders – Forearms

1. Standing Dumbbell Press 6 x 8      1<sup>st</sup> Workout of the day
2. Reverse Curl 5 x 10      2<sup>nd</sup> Workout of the day
3. Palm Up Wrist Curl 5 x 10      3<sup>rd</sup> Workout of the day

Thursday: Thighs – Calves

1. Front Squat 6 x 12, 10, 8, 8, 6, 6      1<sup>st</sup> Workout of the day
2. Sissy Squat 3 x 15      2<sup>nd</sup> Workout of the day
3. Donkey Calf Raises 6 x 12      3<sup>rd</sup> Workout of the day

Friday: Chest – Back – Triceps – Biceps

1. Press to Neck 5 x 8      1<sup>st</sup> Workout of the day
2. Seated Long Lat Rows 5 x 8      1<sup>st</sup> Workout of the day
3. Tricep Press Down 5 x 8      2<sup>nd</sup> Workout of the day
4. Barbell Curl 5 x 8      2<sup>nd</sup> Workout of the day

Saturday: Off

Sunday: Thighs – Calves

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Leg Extensions 5 x 10     | 1 <sup>st</sup> Workout of the day |
| 2. Leg Curl 5 x 10           | 1 <sup>st</sup> Workout of the day |
| 3. Seated Calf Raises 6 x 10 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Workout of the day |
| 4. Side Lateral Raises 4 x 8 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Workout of the day |

Unique concept? I don't think so. Remember I have always said that there is nothing new under the sun or in bodybuilding. If you think of it I can almost guarantee someone else did before you. Breaking your workouts into twice a day instead of once can go a long way on allowing you to increase your intensity level for each muscle group being worked. If possible, it might offer even more intensity to break your workouts into three times per day. This of course depends on a lot of different factors some of which you may not have any control over.

I have had numerous people report a severe soreness in their muscles once they begin this program due to the all out intensity they could apply to each muscle group. Adding more weight, cutting the rest intervals, and using more mind focus in each movement with less distraction. Many still have not grasped the importance of the mind – body relationship. How the mind can actually force muscles to grow and respond.

For most people, including myself, a short attention span of 15 to maybe 20 minutes is all that can be relied upon. Workouts lasting one hour and longer allow for a drift in the minds ability to focus and concentrate on the task at hand. This results in a decrease of potential progress. A key element in bodybuilding success, and one not often talked about is how important it is to have the mind totally focusing on the muscle being worked. Mind power is an element developed to its maximum level in virtually every champion and, very often, that is what separates champions from all others.