

Over Training

By

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If I may, a spin on Shakespeare: To train or not to train... that is not really the question. The question is how much to train! Beginner to the most advanced bodybuilder has fallen into the over training trap at one time or another. For most, even while keeping a close watch for it, over training can creep in and ruin progress like nothing else. Beginners are often the most plagued with over training because of their enthusiasm and inexperience. Intermediate and advanced bodybuilders, more experienced and enthusiastic themselves, can and do fall prey to over training. No one is immune to the wrath over training can set upon them.

Irritable, nervous, increase in blood pressure, fatigue, sluggishness, low resistance, loss of enthusiasm, lack of progress and gains and the very worst of all; actual muscle tissue loss. All these and more are signs of over training. Why then does anyone over train? Well I don't know of a single person who over trains on purpose or plans to do so, it's just one of those things that happens, even to the best of them.

You have to be cautious as over training slips in under our radar without so much as even a warning. Once upon us it "hits" and "hits" with a vengeance. It all begins very subtly one small sneaky step at a time. You can't tell it to begin with and that's what makes it so difficult to catch. Over training does not necessarily affect the entire body in every case; it can affect individual muscle groups, arms, chest, legs, etc. This makes it even more difficult in exerting caution and a watchful eye for over training signs.

Take biceps for example. Although this is perhaps the most commonly over trained muscle group of the beginner and intermediate, advanced bodybuilders also succumb from time to time. You're working biceps hard and have seen some progress; this stirs you on and makes you want to do more. Now you are at the point you want to really "bomb and blast" the biceps into total submission each and every workout. What you have been doing and the poundage you have been using is not enough... you need more! You do more! You feel completely wiped out after your workout and you're proud you blasted your biceps until you can't even bend your arm to drink a glass of water. You do this not for one workout but for every workout. Your chest has grown at least two inches just from holding it high with pride. You look in the mirror every time you pass one to glance at those "hanging hams". You measure your arms and discover they have grown a quarter of an inch. Ahhh! You have found the secret to arm growth, "Bomb and Blast" them into submission each and every workout.

A few weeks go by and you again measure your arms. What! After all your hard work they are actually smaller now than they were a month ago! That can't be! You've been nervous lately and tired all the time. You really don't want to workout and skip workouts, except for days you do biceps that is. You just don't feel good. You rationalize your arm shrinkage is due to you coming down with something. Oh boy! Have you missed the mark! What has really taken place is, you are now a poster-boy for over training. Welcome to the club. Membership consists of everyone who ever was a bodybuilder at one point in time or another. You are now an official member and you have paid your dues.

All the signs and indications I mentioned earlier are warning signs from the body that you are over training. Your body is actually telling you to cut back, "you're doing too much." Only with time and experience, having over trained a few times, will you be able to understand what your body is trying to tell you. You cannot work every muscle to the point of complete failure every workout and expect to make progress. It is not possible and you will fall to over training. Yes, you can train hard and some people can train harder and longer than others but no one can train all out every workout every time.

Natural bodybuilders suffer from over training more so than those who take steroids and other bodybuilding drugs. Even so, DO NOT EXPERIMENT, TAKE, OR USE ANY STEROIDS! The negatives associated with steroid use far outweigh any imagined or possible positives. I can't be clearer than that.

Once you have discovered you are in the grips of the over training monster the first thing you need to do is take a layoff. For most, two weeks will do. Some might get by with only taking one week off but it would be better to discontinue all weight training and all other strenuous activity for two full weeks. Some actually need to take a full month off. Your body needs the rest.

This is what I have done in the past and what I will do in the future should I find myself in a state of over training. The first thing is a two-week layoff. No weights, exercises, running, nothing... for two weeks. I try to get additional sleep and if at all possible a nap sometime in the day. It may be only for about fifteen to thirty minutes and that's fine. I increase my B-Complex to 100 mg, Vitamin C to 3,000 mg, Vitamin E to 800 I.U. and make certain I am taking a good multi vitamin-mineral tablet. I consume additional liquids and fruits. This is what I do... I'm not suggesting you do the same. Some may not be able to follow this. Check with your doctor or health care provider before you make any changes in your exercise or diet activity.

After two weeks off, I return feeling fresh and energized. I begin slowly. I don't start with a planned routine I just get into the gym and begin exercising. I will train one body part only each day. Monday – Chest, Tuesday – Back – Wednesday – Legs, Thursday – Arms, Friday – Shoulders. Rest on Saturday and Sunday. I will do this for two weeks each session increasing the intensity. Week three I begin to follow a routine designed for whatever specific goals I might have.

Good Luck!