

Pre-Exhaust

by

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Bodybuilders continually strive to find better ways to ensure increased muscle growth occurs from their training routines. Over the years, this has brought about numerous methods and variations to routines already well established. Very little is new when it comes to these routines and methods. In fact, since my very first experiences, in bodybuilding, some forty years ago, I don't think anything new has come about. Oh, people do claim some "New" or "Super" routine has just been discovered, and, this comes up every year or two on a regular basis, when in reality it's not "New" or "Super" at all but just a modification or resurfacing of one that has been around for years. It's like the 10 x 10 routine. Almost every year I hear someone talking about a "just discovered" new routine called the 10 x 10. It's been around for more years than I am old, it is "super" but it is definitely not new.

This is common due to the thousands of people who discover bodybuilding for the first time. They are not familiar with the history of the sport so almost anything they hear for the first time is new to them, even though it most likely is not.

The pre-exhaust system is a very valuable method in adding additional size, especially if you have hit one of those annoying sticking points. You can use it to help bring about new momentum and continued gains. I really do not suggest following a pre-exhaust program for extended periods of time. Some do and find success in doing so, I prefer to use pre-exhaust as a shock program. Shock the muscles into a new growth phase and then proceed to follow a different program based on my needs. Nothing new here either, it's simply a matter of cycle training.

Many bodybuilders do not like the pre-exhaust system because it prevents them from using maximum poundage's in movements. The old ego thing, you know what I'm talking about; to heck with form – technique – and muscle isolation, lift, pull, push, and tug all you can at all costs! In other words, dumb training by stupid people! Let's not go down that path right now... back to the pre-exhaust routine.

There are several benefits to a pre-exhaust routine, depending on how you perform the routine. You can isolate the muscles you want to work, you can reduce the total amount of time you spend working out, You can achieve a pump faster, you can train alone if need be because you will not be using weights in excess of what you can handle. These are just some of the benefits from employing a pre-exhaust routine.

The whole trick with a pre-exhaust routine is to fatigue the muscle you are working before the secondary muscles give out. For example, the chest: In almost any routine and movement for the chest, the triceps and delts give out before the pecs do. With a pre-exhaust routine, you actually make the pecs do more direct work thus; they will give out before the triceps and delts. In reality this is exactly what you should strive for, fatigue of the muscle you are working before the assisting muscles give out.

Many variations can be developed using a pre-exhaust routine. Some require you to warm up, then do one isolation movement immediately proceeded by a compound movement for only 1 set. Once again using the chest as an example; you would thoroughly warm up, perform one set of dumbbell flyes for 10 to 12 reps then immediately perform one set of incline bench presses. The one set approach requires you to use the maximum amount of weight you can handle. The flyes directly work the pecs and when you move to the press, the pecs are already starting to fatigue, and they will do so before your delts and triceps. This allows more direct work on the pecs. The same principle is applied to a pre-exhaust routine that calls for 3 or 4 sets and two or more movements per muscle group.

Only occasionally have I encouraged the 1 set to failure pre-exhaust routine. I have found better success and results while employing the principle using two movements per body

part and performing 4 to 5 sets. I am not very enthusiastic about any routine calling for a 1 set of maximum. I have used those programs myself and I know some who have responded very well from incorporating 1 set of maximums into their training but, I do not feel it to be the best way to train and I never obtained very good results from them.

When you undertake a pre-exhaust routine the first thing you will discover is that you are going to be unable to lift as much weight as you think you can. It will take you several sessions to find the proper poundage's for the various movements so be sure to keep a good training log to help you with this.

Here is an example pre-exhaust routine for the entire body. Remember; warm up thoroughly before each session. This example routine is not presented in super-set, tri-set, or giant-set fashion. You can certainly modify it for any of these programs. In fact, I would recommend you actually do so from time to time for two very good reasons. One, it will work your muscles from a different perspective and two; it will add variety to your workouts and help keep you motivated.

Monday & Thursday

Chest / Triceps / Calves

I. Chest

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Flat Bench Dumbbell Flyes | 4 x 10 |
| 2. Barbell Press to Neck | 4 x 8 |
| 3. Decline Flyes | 4 x 10 |
| 4. Dips | 4 x 8 |

II. Triceps

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Triceps Press Downs | 4 x 10 |
| 2. Close Grip Triceps Press | 4 x 8 |
| 3. Triceps Kick Backs | 3 x 12 |
| 4. Triceps Extension (EZ Curl Bar) | 4 x 8 |

III. Calves

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| 1. Seated Calf Raises | 4 x 20 |
| 2. Standing Calf Raises | 5 x 15 |

Tuesday & Friday

Back / Biceps

I. Back

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| 1. Lat Pulldowns to Front | 4 x 10 |
| 2. Bent Over Barbell Rows | 4 x 8 |
| 3. Seated Long Lat Row | 4 x 10 |
| 4. One Arm Dumbbell Row | 4 x 8 |
| 5. Seated Dumbbell Shrug | 3 x 10 |
| 6. Standing Barbell Shrug | 3 x 8 |
| 7. Stiff Leg Dead Lift | 3 x 12 |

II. Biceps

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Incline Dumbbell Curl | 3 x 10 |
| 2. Barbell Curl (straight bar) | 3 x 8 |
| 3. Concentration Curl | 3 x 10 |
| 4. Close Grip Kneeling Barbell Curl | 3 x 8 |

Wednesday & Saturday

Delts / Thighs Abs

I. Delts

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Seated Side Lateral Raises | 4 x 10 |
| 2. Standing Dumbbell Press | 4 x 8 |
| 3. Bent Over Lateral Raises | 4 x 8 |

II. Thighs

- | | |
|---------------------|--------|
| 1. Leg Extensions | 4 x 12 |
| 2. Full Back Squats | 5 x 8 |
| 3. Sissy Squats | 4 x 12 |
| 4. Leg Curl | 4 x 10 |

III. Abs

- | | |
|--------------|--------|
| 1. Leg Lifts | 4 x 20 |
| 2. Crunches | 4 x 20 |

Here then is a basic six day per week pre-exhaust routine. As mentioned earlier, you can modify this example in numerous ways to match your needs. One of the best would be to use this outline in super-set, tri-set, or giant-set fashion.

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