

Question and Answer Time

by

Alan Palmieri

I usually don't get into writing Q&A type articles because they can lead into so many different directions and the A's can quite often require a lot of explanation so I do my best to avoid them. Still, there comes a time, when after having the same questions asked repeatedly in a short span of time, it might be wise to write about them so in the future I can simply point to the article and won't have to repeat myself over and over again, which I do not like to do. I get so many questions asked I don't even track or keep up with them anymore. The ones I've listed here are just a few that have been asked several times recently.

Q. I've been working out for about two years and interested in developing more power and size. I've made some good progress but it seems like I can't gain any more. I have a small bone structure; I am drug free, six feet tall and weigh 170 pounds. I've been training steady for sixteen months. What type workout would you suggest? This is what I am presently doing.

Monday – Wednesday - Friday

Bench Press 4 x 8

Incline Bench Press 4 x 8

Dumbbell Flyes 4 x 12

Cable Crossovers 4 x 15

Chins 3 x 8

Lat Pulldowns 4 x 10

Seated Lat Rows 4 x 10

Barbell Shrug 4 x 10

Good Mornings 3 x 12

Tuesday – Thursday – Saturday

Bench Squats 4 x 8

Leg Curl 3 x 10

Calf Raises 4 x 10

Side Lateral Raises 4 x 10

Barbell Curl 3 x 8

Alternate Dumbbell Curl 4 x 8

Preacher Curl 3 x 8

Triceps Press Down 4 x 10

Lying Triceps Extension 4 x 10

Reverse Curl 3 x 12

A. Well, that's a pretty heavy workout and chances are you have hit a sticking point. Since you didn't tell me how long you've been on this program, what diet you follow or supplements you are taking I'll have to talk in general terms and maybe some of the response will provide useful information.

The first thing I would do is cut way back. You're doing far too much to spur on any size or strength gain for your genetic makeup. You have a small to medium bone structure and your present workout will not help you build power or strength. Here is what I would recommend.

Monday & Thursday

Bench Press 5 x 5 using maximum weight on each set

Incline Bench Press 5 x 6 using maximum weight on each set

Bent Over Barbell Row 5 x 5

Standing Power Cleans 5 x 5

Dead Lifts 3 x 8

Barbell Curl 5 x 6

Tuesday & Friday

Full Back Squat 5 x 10

Hack Squat 3 x 8

Leg Curl 3 x 10

Military Barbell Press 5 x 5

Dips 5 x 5 (use a weight belt to add resistance)

Calf Raises 6 x 12

You will rest on Wednesday – Saturday – Sunday. Make each workout an all out effort. Don't worry about performing only one direct movement for your biceps, the other exercises will tax them enough. This is a lot less than you have been doing and you should start to see some good results fairly quickly. Keep your diet high in complex carbs and plenty of good quality protein.

Q. What type of protein do you take?

A. Glad you asked what type I take instead of what brand I recommend. I change brands and methods a lot. At present I take amino acid tablets with a glass of fresh juice about thirty minutes before my workout. Immediately following a workout I will fix a whey protein shake. Before retiring to bed I'll fix a milk and egg protein drink. That's about it. Sometimes I'll fix a protein drink in the morning if I feel I'm going to have an especially active day.

The amino acid tablets help feed the muscles while they are being worked and whey protein enters the blood stream very fast so immediately after a workout I'll fix a shake. Milk and egg protein digests rather slowly. For this reason I'll fix a milk and egg protein shake just before retiring for the night.

Q. If you had to choose one exercise and one exercise only for the biceps what would it be?

A. 35 to 45 degree Incline Dumbbell Curls. They add size, shape, and power to the biceps.

Q. What do you think are the major factors for not getting results from working out?

A. Talking too much while working out and not concentrating on the movements being performed.

Resting too long between sets.

Not knowing how to use the equipment properly.

Not being regular with workouts.

Holding back.

Being afraid to experiment.

Listening to bad advice.

Poor diet and nutrition.

Q. What do you consider the best workout program?

A. All of them. I'm not trying to be smart or avoid your question but I don't believe in just one program. I have always held to the fact everyone is different so one program may work for you but not someone else.

I train instinctively and believe the best results come from that type of training. I don't recommend instinctive training for beginners because they need to become familiar with a wide variety of movements and techniques. Advanced bodybuilders however, can certainly benefit from instinctive training.

Here's an example. As I am responding to your question I just completed my chest workout. I went to the gym knowing I was going to work my chest but

had no predetermined routine in mind. My body felt full of energy and I began by warming up.

Out of the blue I felt like super-setting and so I did. I began a superset with flat dumbbell flyes and the incline barbell press for five sets of six to eight reps. I then performed a superset of the decline dumbbell press with dumbbell pullovers for five sets of eight to ten reps. I then did straight sets of dips for five sets of five reps with weight around my waist. It was a great workout for me. I had more energy today than most days so I let my body and mind direct my training. Next time I might only perform half of what I did today... who knows! Training instinctively I don't get bored and I feel I work harder.

Q. Do you believe you need to work calves for reps of 20 or higher for them to grow?

A. Yes and no. How's that for being a politician. What I mean is I believe you need to incorporate both high and low rep volume when training calves.

You are either blessed with good calf development or you're not, one or the other. Those of us who drew the short straw in the calf department have to bust a gut to get any visible sign of improvement in the lower leg department. It's hard work and requires an all around plan of attack.

To help encourage calf growth I like to work my calves three times a week for two months and then twice a week for two months. I then will work the calves once a week for two months. That provides a full six months of training and enough time for me to evaluate what I will do next. At the end of the third cycle I adjust my routine based on what has taken place.

For the first two months, a cycle workout might consist of the following.

Monday: Standing Calf Raises 6 – 8 sets of 6 – 10 reps pyramiding weight each set.

Wednesday: Standing Calf Raises 6 – 8 sets of 25 – 50 reps.

Friday: Donkey Calf Raises 6 – 8 sets for 10 to 15 reps.

The second two month cycle might look like this.

Monday: Standing Calf Raises 6 – 8 sets of 10 to 15 reps
Seated Calf Raises 6 x 12

Thursday: Donkey calf raises 6 x 12
Toe press on leg press machine 4 x 25

The third two month cycle might look like this.

Monday: Standing Calf Raise 1 x 25, 1 x 15, 1 x 12, 1 x 10, 1 x 8, 1 x 6, 1 x 5, 1 x 3. Seven total sets pyramiding up in weight each set. I would then perform one last set with no weight for as many reps as I can get shooting for 100.

Q. I believe the forearms get a good workout while performing other movements and for that reason I don't do any direct forearm work. Do you think I am making a mistake?

A. Maybe for you it's not a mistake but for me it would be. Once again I have to touch on the genetic part of your question. I've know people who just naturally had well developed forearms and they didn't need to perform any direct work on them. For me however, that is not the case. I must train forearms just like any other body part in order for them to grow.

Even if you have gifted forearms you could still improve their appearance and strength by training them, maybe not as often but on a limited basis.

Q. Do you feel weightlifting is wise for a 13 year old?

A. The best way I can answer this is through my own actions. I have a grandson who is 12. He works out with me from time to time. He loves lifting weights but also knows it is serious and not a game. I've taught him proper form and technique. When we workout, he does not use maximum weight in any lift and he does higher reps. Another thing, he does not train on any certain schedule. He may workout once this week, twice next week. He might skip a couple of weeks. In other words, I don't pressure him to follow a strict workout schedule. When we workout, I make certain he does more than just bench presses and curls. We do squats, bent over rows, calf raises, chins and other movements. I want him to learn the right way to train.

At his age, lifting heavy can result in damage to his joints and bones. He gets a great workout but he also has been taught the proper way of lifting. The important thing is to make certain your teenager knows how to lift weights safely and wisely. Don't force him and don't allow him to take it to the extremes.

My granddaughter is 8 years old and she too wants to workout. Personally I think that's great and I work with her from time to time. At her age, she does not and I won't let her train with any amount of weight at all. Usually just the bar or 1 or 2 pound dumbbells. At her age is still just playing but I feel important for her to know terms as well as the purpose of exercise and how to lift properly. She always competes with her brother so I have to keep a close eye on her or she'll try anything.

Q. When is the best time to train the rear deltoids, on days you work the front and side deltoid or on back day?

A. I've done it both ways and like training rear delts on back day's best. Back work warms up my rear delts and I can really work them hard. I've experienced better results training rear delts with back work.

Q. I take a whey protein supplement and mix it with water to keep down my fat intake. Is there anything I can do to make the consistency thicker?

A. You can do a couple of things but this is what I sometimes do and you can adjust it from there. I'll put about 4 to 6 oz. of skim milk in a glass, add my whey and mix it with a spoon. I then add about 6 oz of fat free half and half and about four ice cubes. I then put it all into a large plastic cup and use a hand blender to chop up the ice and mix it up. This makes it thick and creamy. If you want to make it even creamier, add some Cool Whip on top when you finish mixing.

Q. I have just changed jobs and don't have much time to train. I can only manage maybe thirty minutes two or three times a week. Any advice on how I can workout my entire body on that type of schedule?

A. Crunches, dips, chins, and one leg squats or Sissy Squats. Since you didn't indicate your fitness level I don't know how many sets and reps to suggest. Crunches will take care of the abs. Dips will work the chest, delts, triceps. Chins will take care of the back and biceps. One leg squats will really blast the thighs, as will Sissy Squats. You can perform chins to work more back or more arms depending on how you perform them. The same is true with dips; depending on how you do them you can emphasis more on chest or triceps. This will do until you can settle into a better routine.

Q. Side Lateral Raises really hurt my shoulders, so do Barbell Behind Neck Presses. Is there anything I can do to increase the size of my shoulders without doing these two movements?

A. Lateral raises tend to cause a lot of pain for many trainees. I'm one of them. I perform the movement but have learned two important things. One, warm up thoroughly first, and by thoroughly I don't mean just performing one light set of something. What I mean is several light sets while in-between adding several minutes of stretching and rotating the joint. Two, a slight alteration in the hand placement as well as the arch of the arms in performing the movement makes a difference.

I perform lateral raises because they are productive but they are not the only movement that can slap muscle onto your delts. In fact, presses do more for me, and I believe the majority of bodybuilders in adding muscle mass to the delts.

You don't have to perform barbell presses behind the neck either. I've done them but always felt they place the shoulder joints in a bad position. I prefer seated or standing military presses (barbell pressed from under the chin to overhead), or my favorite, dumbbell presses. Believe me, presses are the key to thick delts so don't sweat the lateral raises. In time and with plenty of patience you may discover you can actually do lateral raises without any pain.

Q. You've talked a lot about the 1960's bodybuilding scene being steroid free and the time before steroids took over the sport but from what I read, steroids were used pretty much by most bodybuilders in the 60's. Am I missing a point you are trying to make?

A. Steroids go back to perhaps the 30's and 40's. They were only being tested and developed during that time. In the 1950's, the time many authorities credit as the birth of steroids, weightlifters were experimenting with them but only a very few bodybuilders actually took them. In the 60's the very close knit and limited circle of top bodybuilders and their friends started using such steroids as Dianabol, Decca, and Winstrol.

Dianabol was usually taken as a 5mg dose. Naturally some took more and some combined the steroids. Not much was really known about them other than they helped add size and strength.

Maybe the 60's was the widespread birth of steroid usage but the vast majority of bodybuilders and the public were still not aware of what they were or what they did. I know the circles I ran in had heard about them but we didn't use them or even try them. The ones we knew who were using them were using small dosages, still the vast majority of bodybuilders I personally knew well stayed clear from any steroid usage.

Sure it can be argued who knew what and who used what but I'm talking about my personal knowledge. I knew a lot of guys who used roids. Unfortunately some misused them in a very terrible way. Again, unfortunately some of those people are not with us today and in some cases it is a direct result of their roid use.

I've spent my entire career talking and working against steroids and muscle enhancing drugs. You're right, they were around in the 60's but there were many more bodybuilders who weren't on the roids than who were. In the late 60's it changed and steroid use became common place. That was in the late 60's and 70's, the time I departed from any participation in bodybuilding, including working out. I became completely disgusted with the invasion of steroids into a sport and activity I so dearly loved.

There is no room in bodybuilding for steroids or muscle enhancing drugs. In my opinion it needs to be cleaned up. Didn't mean to rant in responding to your question but I also couldn't let the opportunity to knock drug usage either.

www.PalmieriBodybuilding.com

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