

Too Much

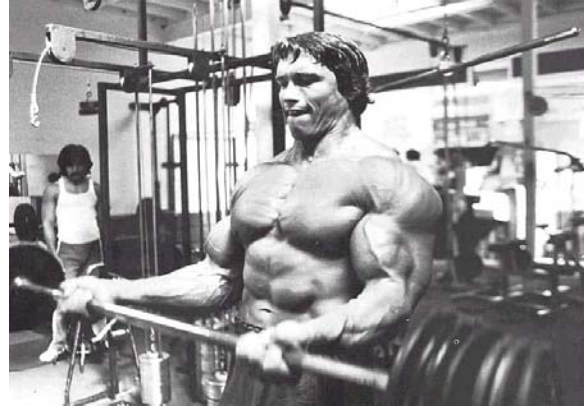
by

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Ego and the quest to lift heavier and heavier can result in a situation that will actually reverse your bodybuilding progress. That's right, not bring it to a halt but actually reverse your hard earned progress... muscle loss! Beginner to advanced bodybuilders can fall prey to the negative effects of trying to lift too heavy. The line between too heavy and not enough is often very thin but it does exist. No one can tell you where that line is or when you are crossing it... that is something each of us has to discover for ourselves - through experience.

Although lifting a weight heavier than one can handle properly can be seen in almost every exercise, there are three movements that seem to get more attention than others; the bench press, barbell curl, and calf raises. You've seen what I'm talking about. The guy performing a bench press who lifts his butt and back off the bench so the only thing touching the bench is the back of his head. How they keep from breaking their necks I'll never know. They also bring the bar down with a crash so they can bounce the bar off their chest.

Then there are those guys who load the bar with so much weight when they perform barbell curls; every muscle in the body is strained to the max except for the biceps. Their thighs and back are getting more of a workout as they don't just swing the weight up they hurl it up by passing the biceps altogether.



Left is a photo of a young Arnold Schwarzenegger performing a Cheat Barbell Curl. Notice the tremendous arching of the back. A lot of leg, hip, and back swing went into this movement. Although bicep strength is needed to perform the movement with excessive weight, the least worked muscles are the biceps. Right is another photo of Arnold performing a Strict Barbell Curl. In this photo, the biceps are definitely getting worked and will produce greater results.

Calf raises is the other example. People load up and do that silly up and down bounce. They use so much weight they can't even get up on their toes to contract the calf muscle. They complain genetics is responsible for their poor calf development! Yeah, right! Unbelievable!

Cheating principles definitely have their place in bodybuilding programs. The principle does not suggest getting the heaviest weight you can handle up anyway possible! It means to use momentum to help get a weight just past a sticking point so the muscles being worked can take over and complete the movement. Too many people abuse cheating and use excessive body swing in an attempt to get the weight from point A to point B and this is wrong.

Focus on the muscle being worked. The more direct workload placed on the muscle the better the results. Excessive cheating because the weight you are using is too heavy does not produce better or more results for bodybuilding. This now brings up the question... is it possible to train using form that is too strict? Well, in my opinion, yes! Once again that thin line. All this sounds very confusing I know. That is why if I've said it once I've said it a thousand times – there is no single correct and only way to train.

You need to employ various concepts and methods and through experience, experimentation, and patience, discover that which is best for you. One exception is in the performing of any movement that places harmful resistance or extension on your joints; such as bouncing at the bottom of a squat or hyperextension of your shoulders during flyes and deltoid work, jerking the lower back while performing heavy bent over rows. These are just three examples of some sure fire ways to incur a serious injury.

You shouldn't train ultra strict all the time and you shouldn't train using cheating techniques all the time either. One element that you must watch for while training strict or when using cheating techniques is the amount of weight you use. In either case you can use weight that is too heavy and it will cost you in results. So, whether you are using strict form or loose cheating form, watch the weight because you can use a poundage that is too heavy and may very well result in a serious injury.

Train hard... Train smart... Train right!

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