

Whole Body Giant Set

By

Alan Palmieri

Working the entire body in a single session is not a new concept. In fact, in my early days of bodybuilding that is exactly how I and many others trained, working the entire body three alternate days per week. What is new is that most of today's trainees have never employed the method.

I'm a free spirit when it comes to working out and always employ "instinctive training". Although age has slowed me somewhat in the speed and recuperation category, and it has also reduced my ability to train as heavy as I once did. I find rewards today from pushing myself through different methods and routines.

Recently I decided to perform a couple of weeks worth of full body giant sets, working my entire body three times a week with a day of rest between each days workout. I didn't find it refreshing but I did find it rewarding. This routine is definitely not the pause that refreshes. It taxes the cardio, muscular, mental, and emotional state to ones limits. No matter how good a shape you think you're in this workout will test that and show you really how fit, or unfit you are.

My selected workout days were Monday – Wednesday – Friday. I set aside one month to follow my scheme and then allowed for a full week off before resuming my training following a different routine. I selected movements that would produce results and push me to a different level... it worked. I was always completely spent after each session. At the end of one month I saw a tremendous improvement in my cardio fitness and overall fitness as well. Muscle

gains were about the same so I took away from my experiment that results were obtained although in a different area than perhaps some might have liked.

Naturally you can't expect to cover each individual muscle when following a routine like this, you can't and you won't. It does take quite a bit of time to complete. You can't get it done in thirty minutes and it does require those following the routine to be advanced as anyone with less experience will only over-train and hinder any benefits from the routine.

The workout needs to flow without long rest periods between sets and exercises. You need to keep moving. I found by the time I was into the Bent Over Barbell Rowing movement I was pretty well winded and had to watch my form as it was easy to get a little sloppy due to muscle fatigue. Heavy breathing also seemed to hinder some, but in time as my body adapted, I overcame the difficulties.

1. Full Squat: 1x20, 1x13, 1x8, 1x6
2. Leg Extensions: 3x10
3. Bench Press: 1x15, 1x8, 1x8, 1x6
4. Dumbbell Flyes: 3x10
5. Bent Over Barbell Row: 1x15, 1x12, 1x10, 1x8
6. Dumbbell Shrug: 3x8
7. Seated Smith Machine Press: 1x10, 1x8, 1x6, 1x6
8. Standing Side Lateral Raises: 3x8
9. Barbell Curl: 4x8
10. Seated Dumbbell Curl: 3x8
11. Triceps Extensions: 4x8
12. Triceps Press Downs: 3x10
13. Crunches: 3x20
14. Reverse Crunches: 3x20
15. Calf Raises: 5x10

Now for the twist to this routine – I did the workout listed above just as outlined one week then the next week I changed it so I performed only one set of each exercise and then proceeded to the next one. After completing exercise 15, Calf Raises, I would rest for about five minutes and then start all over again with the first exercise. It's a version of the old PHA (Peripheral Heart Action) principle. Three sets in this fashion were enough.

PHA training has been both praised and degraded. Some loved it while some felt it was nothing more than a drain on the body's resources. Actually PHA training requires you perform an upper body movement followed by a lower body movement. For my purpose however, I followed the routine as outlined. When doing so, I performed 3 sets of each movement. I also did not pyramid up in weight. One of the keys is to find the poundage you can use to perform all the sets with, the same weight, not upping or lowering it.

It all boils down to variety that is much needed, especially for anyone who has been doing the same routine for too long. I'm not a big fan of this type of training but like so many things, change often helps run off the "stale bugs", provides the body with some change that usually produces gains, and keeps motivation purring right along.

Good Luck!

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