



Big-7

Growth Guidelines

Keep Your Anabolism on Track With
This Big-Time Checklist

by **Eric Broser**

Photography by **Michael Neveux**

One of my favorite things about bodybuilding is that it's purely an individual endeavor. Your degree of success or failure is contingent on your own efforts and not those of your teammates or friends. You cannot pass the ball or call in a relief pitcher; you must fight to the finish line completely under your own power. When things are not going your way, you can't argue with an umpire, check the replay or yell at a referee. You have to sit down and figure out exactly why you're not getting where you want to be and then determine precisely how you can get back on track. Since there is no official rulebook in bodybuilding, it's up to you to write your own set of rules. You must decide when to train, how to train, what foods to eat, how much to eat, which supplements to take and, most important, just how consistent in and dedicated to all of these factors you'll be.

Now, just because it's totally up to you to make all of the final decisions in your approach to bodybuilding doesn't mean you

cannot seek out as much information as possible from more experienced and/or educated sources than yourself. There are people who have made it their life's work to fully understand, coordinate, properly apply and teach the basic principles of achieving optimal muscle mass and strength. All trainees should take full advantage of what those people have to offer, as it will minimize guesswork and put them on a much clearer and quicker path to their goals.

In my 20 years of bodybuilding and my 15-plus years of personal training and coaching, I've managed to put together what is not so much a rulebook as a set of guidelines that seem to work for just about everyone. They helped me go from a skinny 125 pounds to a hard 255, my off-season bodyweight. Of course, individuals differ in terms of genetics, fiber types, metabolism, somatotype, recovery ability and so on, and those differences will certainly affect how well and how efficiently each of us can develop his or her physique. Even so, I feel there are certain truths that apply to everyone. I like to call them the Growth Guidelines.

Model: **Berry Kabbov**

Guideline 1**Base the majority of your training on compound movements.**

While I have nothing against machines and cables, there's no doubt that the greatest muscle builders are free-weight compound exercises. In the 1950s, '60s and '70s huge physiques were built with little more than barbells and dumbbells. Fancy machinery was just not around back then, but regardless, many herculean physiques were. The balance and concentration it takes to lift free weights activates more muscles (including the target, synergists and stabilizers) and more muscle fibers and "excites" the nervous system (which can enhance the adaptive response) more than machines or cables do.

In addition, heavy compound movements induce a greater release of the muscle-building hormones—**testosterone** and GH. If you talk with the biggest guys around, they'll more than likely tell you that they built most of their mass with basic exercises like bench presses, deadlifts, squats, military presses, bent-over rows, barbell curls and lying triceps extensions. There's nothing wrong with using machines or cables, but if you want to get huge, make free weights the cornerstone of your program.

Heavy compound movements induce a greater release of the muscle-building hormones.

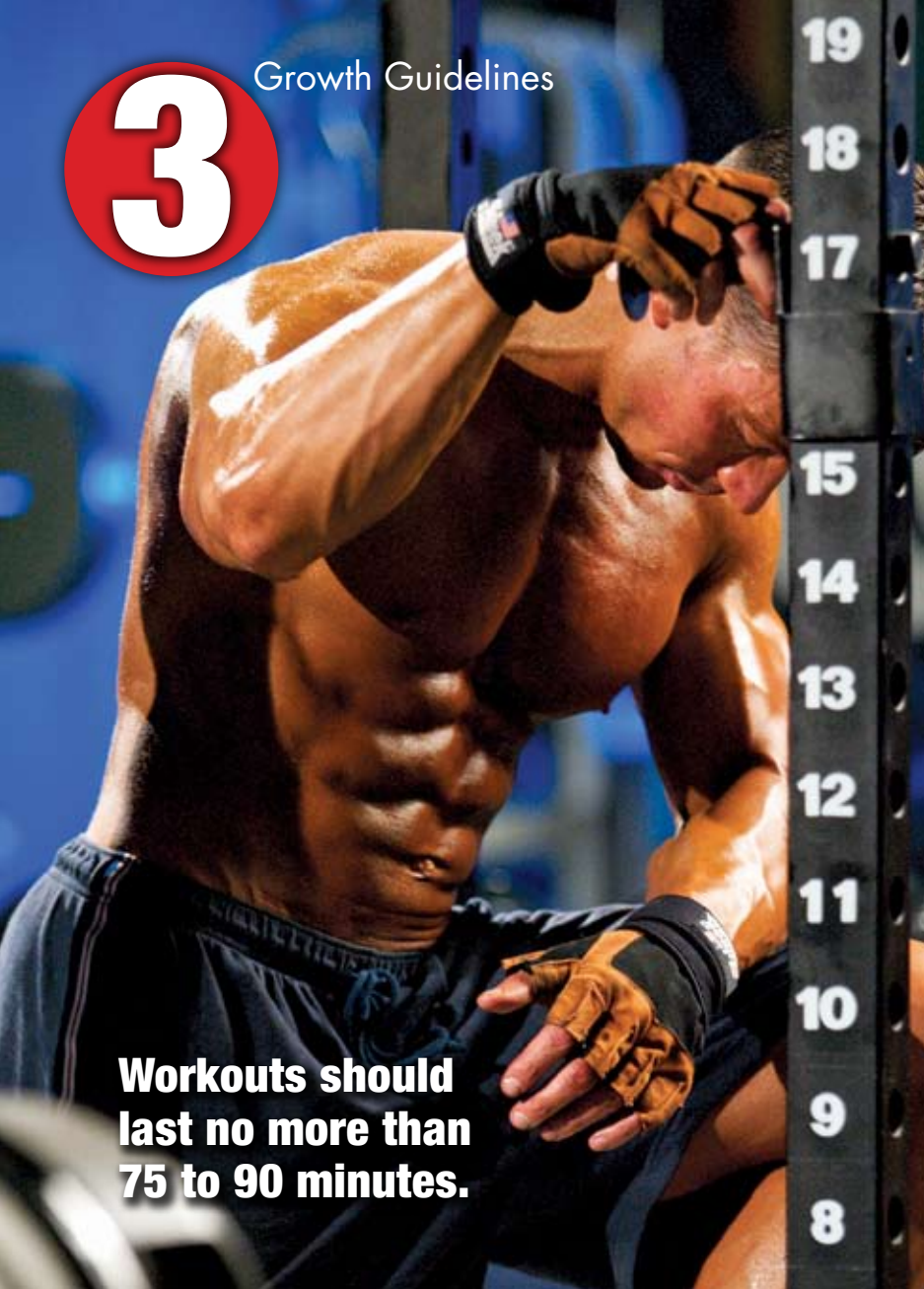
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Guideline 2**Use strict form.**

Using strict form on all of your exercises will assure that you're stimulating the target muscle. Those who throw the weights up when doing lateral raises or barbell curls, for example, are only cheating themselves out of growth. The primary reason that people do this is to create the illusion that they're stronger than they really are. Yes, moving more weight might impress the uneducated in the gym, but the result will be less-than-optimal progress and, eventually, injury. Take trainees who can cheat-curl 150 pounds and make them do the movement strictly, and you will find that they'll barely be able to curl 110 pounds in good form. Interestingly, strictly curling 110 pounds for six reps stimulates much more biceps growth than swinging up 150 pounds for six reps. Once you reach failure using strict form, *then* it's okay to use a reasonable degree of momentum to try to extend your set a bit further.

Strive to stimulate the target muscle.

3



Workouts should last no more than 75 to 90 minutes.

Guideline 3 Don't overdo it.

The body has limited a amount of **recovery** ability, as well as a limited amount of energy to put toward building new muscle tissue. In fact, human physiology prefers homeostasis—maintaining the status quo—and cares little about getting huge. The best stimulus for building muscle is intense weight training in which each set is taken to absolute or near-absolute failure, meaning the point at which another strict repetition cannot be performed. While intense training is exactly what sets in motion the adaptations necessary for gaining size and

strength, it's also precisely what taps deep into the system's ability to recover. That affects not only the muscles but also the central nervous system.

In addition to repairing the microtrauma that occurs to the muscle fibers during training, the body must also restore hormonal and neurotransmitter balance, reboot the immune system and clear free radicals from the system. And it must accomplish all of that before it has the chance to build new muscle tissue.

Think of a workout as digging a large hole in the ground, complete recovery as filling the hole and muscle growth as creating a mound of dirt on top of the filled hole. When

you overtrain—that is, train too long and/or too often—you dig a hole that's too large to fill, which means you will never have the opportunity to pile dirt on top. No extra dirt means no extra muscle. Here are a few subguidelines to keep you from overdoing it:

- Train no more than four days per week. There's simply no need for more. People with poor recovery ability might actually be better off with only three training days per week. Remember, we stimulate muscle growth in the gym, but we do our actual growing while at rest.

- Do not train more than two days in a row without taking a full day off from the gym. Over the years I've tried every training program imaginable—three-on/one-off, five-on/two-off, four-on/one-off, etc. Although I did make very nice progress on them, my best bodybuilding gains came from either every-other-day training or the program I currently use, a two-on/one-off/two-on/two-off cycle. As a natural bodybuilder I have found that after two days of intense training my mind and body are always ready for a day or two off. Whenever other commitments force me to train three days in a row, I find myself to be sluggish and unmotivated on that third workout day. I have seen the same with most of my clients as well. Additionally, I have observed that when most people train on three or four days in a row, their immune systems become compromised, making them more susceptible to illness or injury

- Workouts should last no more than 75 to 90 minutes. The scientific evidence indicates that **testosterone** levels begin to drop and cortisol begins to rise dramatically after that, which will drag your body down by making it more difficult to achieve an anabolic, or growth-inducing, state once the workout is over. Besides, there's no reason a workout should take longer than that. If it does, chances are you're doing too many sets and/or exercises, or you're being far too social in the gym. If you're serious about getting big, get in the gym, do what you have to, and get out.

Model: Jonathan Lawson

4

Guideline 4 Eat your protein!

This is perhaps the most important advice I can offer. Muscle is protein. The body requires protein to build and repair muscle tissue. Not eating enough can hinder your gains no matter how well thought out your training and supplementation programs are. How much **protein** is enough? Most trainees must get at least one gram of protein per pound of bodyweight daily. That's a minimum, however. It's my experience that trainees achieve faster gains in size and strength when their protein intake is closer to 1.5 to two grams per pound of bodyweight.

It's also important to get your protein over six to eight daily meals rather than two or three. That way your body will have amino acids available throughout the day for growth and repair. Also, you can more efficiently digest smaller, more frequent protein feedings than overly large portions. You want your protein to go to your muscle cells, not the toilet bowl.

The **protein** sources you choose will depend on your taste, your budget and what's readily available. Some of the best sources are chicken, turkey, red meat, eggs, fish, buffalo, venison, ostrich, milk and cottage cheese. You may wish to purchase one of the many high-quality meal-replacement or protein powders that are now available. Two or three meals per day can come from the powders; at certain times (like pre- and postworkout) they're even more advantageous than whole-food proteins.

(continued on page 192)

Use smaller, more frequent feedings. You want your protein to go to your muscle cells, not to the toilet bowl.



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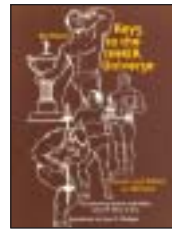
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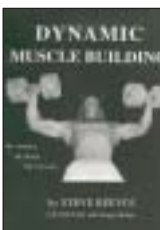
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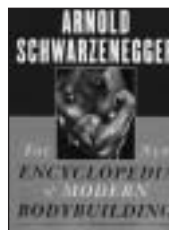
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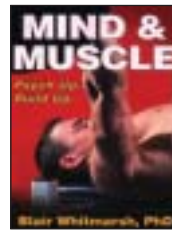
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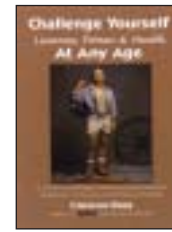
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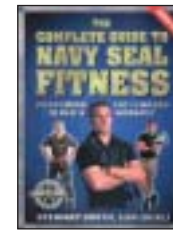
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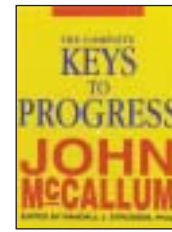
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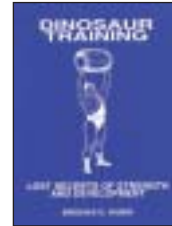
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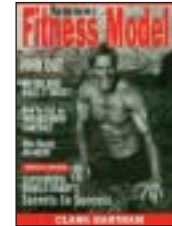
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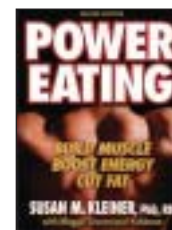
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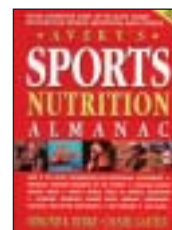
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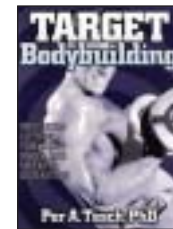
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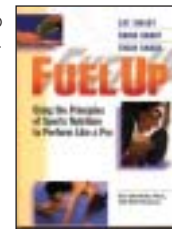
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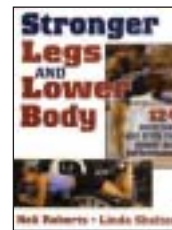
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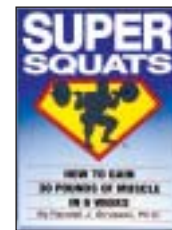
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During an intense workout you drain your muscles of nutrients.



Model: Lee Priest

5

Guideline 5 **Take advantage of the postworkout anabolic window.**

The opportunity for aiding your muscle-building efforts in the 60 minutes that follow a workout is so important, I don't know why anyone would fail to take full advantage of it. In fact, next to breakfast, the postworkout meal is without a doubt the most essential feeding of the day for all bodybuilders or other athletes. Not only are your muscles starving for protein and carbohydrates, but also your entire metabol-

ic machinery is in a state where a tremendous amount of nutrients can be preferentially shuttled directly toward muscle cells and away from fat cells. The best thing you can do at this time is to whip up and drink a shake containing 30 to 60 grams of fast-acting protein and 60 to 120 grams of high-glycemic carbs (the exact amounts will depend on your bodyweight and goals). Since whey (especially hydrolysate) is absorbed more quickly than any other protein, it would be the optimal source at this time. The carbs should also be fast acting in order to create an insulin spike. High insulin levels are important postworkout, as insulin is responsible for transporting

carbohydrates, amino acids and creatine directly into muscle cells.

A perfect post-workout carb source would be dextrose or maltodextrin powder mixed with the whey. And if you're truly serious about getting huge, you'll drink another whey and dextrose or maltodextrin mixture approximately one hour later. Studies—and tons of anecdotal evidence—have shown that this approach to postworkout nutrition is optimal for gains in size and strength. [Editor's note: For a perfect postworkout mix, visit www.X-Stack.com.]

(continued on page 196)



Model: Cesar Martinez

After training, you should replenish with plenty of high-glycemic carbs and fast protein.

6

Growth Guidelines

Guideline 6

Use the right supplements.

While it's not 100 percent necessary to use supplements to make progress, they certainly can hasten results. The world of nutritional supplementation can be quite confusing. Sifting through the fantastic claims made by manufacturers can be very exciting, but you need to know what's for real and what's just marketing hype. There are a plethora of excellent products out there that can certainly help you add muscle and lose fat, but for every one that works there are probably two or three whose only effect is to thin your wallet.

Here are several items that I believe belong on everyone's must-use list. These time-tested supplements have proved their worth over and over again to thousands and thousands of users.

The first is a quality protein powder. As mentioned above, **whey** is essential as a quick-acting protein source after your workout. It's also quite valuable before you train. Having a whey shake about 30 to 45 minutes before your workout will ensure that amino acids are coursing through your veins as you train, which will help prevent muscle tissue from being broken down as an energy source during the latter portion of your workout. Before bed or at any other time of day that you can't eat a whole-food meal, however, a **protein blend of casein, whey and egg albumin** is best.

While whey is absorbed very rapidly, protein blends containing casein and egg have a sort of timed-release effect. That's beneficial in the hours between meals and especially before you retire for the night, when you're basically fasting for six to eight hours. The trickle-feed effect will keep

your body from falling into a catabolic state and enable the repair process to take place at full force while you snooze. [Editor's note: For information on **Muscle Meals**, a quality blended-protein meal replacement, see page 216.]

Next is creatine—perhaps the most well-researched of all supplements currently on the market. It has proven itself time and again in both the lab and the gym. Among creatine's benefits are increased strength, enhanced nitrogen retention, cell volumization and lactic acid buffering. It has proven safe and effective for almost everyone who uses it. Some people have complained that it causes them stomach upset, but there are now many different forms of creatine available, and I am sure that one of them will agree with you. One other comment that I often hear about **creatine** is that all of the weight gained is simply water. What people do not realize, however, is that creatine draws water directly into muscle cells, and the more hydrated a muscle cell is, the more "anabolic" it is. Having well-volumized muscle cells is a very powerful trigger for growth.

Branched-chain amino acids are another powerhouse supplement that should be in every serious bodybuilder's cupboard. BCAAs enhance nitrogen retention and protein synthesis and also reduce muscle breakdown. That makes them both anabolic and anticatabolic (a characteristic they share with anabolic steroids). Taken between meals, BCAAs can help re-

duce appetite, which is of tremendous use during a calorie-restricted diet. Some studies have shown that BCAAs can also aid in fat burning and keep focus, energy and stamina elevated during intense training when taken immediately before a workout.

Finally, there's my personal favorite—glutamine. I use large amounts of glutamine year-around and recommend it to anyone who trains regularly. Among its myriad benefits are enhanced immune function (I never get sick anymore!), increased glycogen storage, increased production of glutathione (one of the body's most powerful antioxidants), enhanced gut health, cell volumization and natural growth hormone release. It's rare to find a supplement that has so many positive effects.

The key to glutamine supplementation is to take enough of it and take it at the right times. Significant effects are seen when users consistently take between 15 and 30 grams per day, the best times being 30 minutes before breakfast, your pretraining meal, your post-training meal and your final meal of the day. [Editor's note: That MRP on page 216 also has loads of glutamine peptides, the most potent form of glutamine available.]



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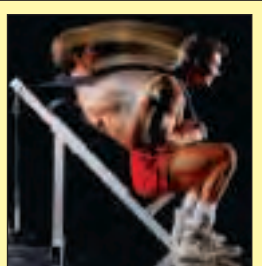
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Growth Guidelines

**Intense workout
stimulate growth,
but the building
processs occurs
when you rest.**

Model: Peter Putman



7

Your body repairs damaged muscles while you sleep. Are you getting enough?

Guideline 7

Get your sleep

Going to the gym and putting in intense workouts day after day is what acts as the stimulus for gains in muscle size and strength. Proper nutrition will give you the building blocks to actually pack new lean tissue on your frame. That will be meaningless, however, if you don't give your body the time to work this magical process. When does your body do 99 percent of its building and repair work? When you sleep.

During sleep all other body processes slow down, and intense recovery takes place. The conscious mind is allowed to chill, and the subconscious keeps us entertained. The central nervous system slows down, along with the heart, digestive system and your injured muscles and joints. Think of sleep as your body's eight-hour muscle-building work shift, and if you can put in a little overtime, expect some extra compensation in the form of more muscle.

One of the biggest reasons trainees fail to make the progress they desire is because they simply neglect their sleep. I understand the

desire to have fun, party a little and occasionally enjoy life into the wee hours, but if you make it a regular habit, you can kiss serious gains in muscle size good-bye. Try to sleep at least seven to nine hours per night, and if you have time for a short midday nap, take one! Dream big to get big.

So there you have it. Seven growth guidelines that can lead to more size, more strength and less bodyfat. Serious bodybuilding is hard work, and you deserve to get the most out of the time you spend in the gym. If you're already making great progress, more power to you; however, if you feel that your gains are slow in coming, put these hints to work for you. As I said, they worked for me and have helped all of my clients. There's no reason they can't help you.

So what are you waiting for? See you at the gym!

Editor's note: For individualized programs, online personal training, nutritional guidance or contest-prep coaching, contact Eric Broser at bodyfx2@aol.com. Readers are also invited to join Broser's bodybuilding and fitness discussion board at www.BuildingMass.com. **IM**

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