

SHREDDED BEEF!



How Jay Cutler Puts His Muscles Through the Meat Grinder for Massive Results

by Steve Holman

If you're a bodybuilder struggling to put on more muscle, you no doubt look to the biggest bodies in the business for answers. Guys like **Ronnie Coleman** and **Jay Cutler** just *have* to know something the rest of us don't—because they're eye-ball-popping huge! Is it genetics? Is it pharmaceutical enhancement? Is it sheer willpower? Yes, to a degree, on all of those counts, but if you watch them train, you'll notice something more—a big part of their secret to extreme muscle size. It's something you can start using immediately to make your workouts three, four or five times more

productive at packing on mass.

Both **Coleman** and **Cutler** use a lot of semistretched-position overload and partial reps. Each has a slightly different style, but you can bet your biceps they've discovered how to hit their muscles with the precise stress that triggers tremendous increases in hypertrophy—and maybe even fiber splitting—and you're about to read exactly how **Cutler** does it, as documented by Mitsuru Okabe on the "**Ripped to Shreds**" two-disc DVD set. Thanks to Mits, we can watch the best bodybuilders train, analyze what they do and come up with

ways to jack up the effectiveness of our own workouts. Let's uncover some of **Cutler's** mega-mass secrets.

WORKOUT 1

Quads. Jay starts by warming up on an exercise bike for 15 minutes and then it's on to Smith-machine squats. He does two sets of light nonlock squats, going deep—and the vascularity materializes almost immediately, streaking down his quads like surgical tubing. Why a nonlock style? Occlusion. Blocking blood flow to the target muscle during a set chokes off oxygen and

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nutrients so that there's an emergency rush of blood into the muscle immediately after the set. That does great things for warming up the muscle, not to mention getting the muscle to grow when it's combined with heavier weights on work sets.

After three progressively heavier warmup sets that include lots of occlusion, Jay does a concentrated, deep set with three 45s on each side of the bar for nine reps. Going below parallel is a must because it attacks the semistretched position, the quads' max-force-generation point (you'll see a lot of this throughout **Cutler's** routine; **Coleman** does the same thing). Then he adds more weight for the money set, which is actually a brutal drop set. He does eight reps, reduces the weight, does three reps, reduces the weight again and does four reps. It's a wicked extended set!

Next up is leg presses. Jay does a 13-rep nonlock warmup set, then adds weight for 10 reps. He rests, then adds weight again for six reps, but on that set he pauses for a few seconds at lockout after rep six before blasting out three more nonlock reps. You can see his outer quads twitching from the overload during that interesting rest/pause technique.

Now it's back to the Smith machine for front squats. He does a semiheavy warmup with 225 for five nonlock reps, pauses for a few seconds at lockout and then does about four more nonlock reps. Apparently, occlusion on the warmup is mandatory. After that he stacks on more weight and does six reps nonlock style, racks it, reduces the weight and immediately does four nonlock reps. Once again, every rep is d-e-e-p.

Any mortal would be done after all of that, but **Cutler** moves to an open area of the gym and does walking lunges. He does stints of eights in the beginning, and it's a nonlock style once again—he stays low, maintaining a crouched squatting position as he moves forward. It's that semistretched-position overload again. For his last set he does 10 reps, stands up and pauses, then does three more reps, stands up and pauses, and then finishes with three more reps. From the look



On lower-ab work he moves his legs past the plane of the bench for stretch work.



on Jay's face you can tell it's a punishing movement, although the weight is relatively light.

He finishes quads with leg extensions, and this is the first time we see shades of the hitch technique that **Ronnie Coleman** uses on shrugs. Here's how **Cutler** uses it: After one warmup set of 13 reps, with partial hitches at the bottom, semistretched position of every rep—a.k.a. **X Reps**—he jacks up the weight for his first work set. He does a few continuous reps, then the hitch technique begins. He pauses near the bottom, semistretched point—that's right, the bottom, not the top—and does one to three short partial explosions before driving through for another full rep. After he does 12 full reps, he immediately reduces the weight and does six reps, every one with the semistretched hitch near the bottom of the stroke. He rests and then does a second drop set interspersed with that important semistretched-overload technique.

To clarify, the semistretched-overload technique is a drive to the top of the stroke, and then he lowers

to just out of the start, stretch position, pulses for one or two explosive partials, or **X Reps**, then drives up through the full stroke again. **Cutler** does that on almost every exercise, so I'll designate that with a hyphen (-) between rep numbers. For example, on his first hamstring exercise, leg curls, his first work set is 4-3-3-2. That means four continuous reps, semistretch-overload **X Reps**, then three continuous reps, more semistretched-position **X Reps** and so on.

Hamstrings. He starts with leg curls, even using the semistretched-point-overload technique on the warmup set: 1 x 8-6-3. His work sets are 1 x 4-3-3-2, 1 x 5-1-1-1-1 and 1 x 4-3-1-1. He employs the technique rather randomly,

but the point is that he uses it often for extreme muscle-growth stimulation.

He then moves to seated leg curls, two sets of 10 with various pauses in the semistretched position for partials. From there he goes to the dumbbell rack and does stiff-legged deadlifts, although his legs are not even close to straight (see the photo on page 215). He does two sets of 10 again with various semistretched-position overload partials near the bottom on most reps. It's the same protocol for standing one-leg leg curls—two sets of 10.

Adductors. You don't see many big men using the adductor machine, but **Jay Cutler** is a stickler for details. His sets are 1 x 6-5-5-3; 1 x 7-2-2-2; and 1 x 4-1-1-1-1, reduce the poundage and 1 x 4-1-1.

Abs. He blasts out three sets of 18 reps on crunches, some interspersed with semistretched-point partials. Then he stays on the floor, rolls onto one side and squeezes out oblique/serratus crunches, two sets of 12 reps.

Now it gets interesting. He moves to an Icarian kneep bench, on

which you support your weight on your forearms in an upright position; however, this bench is angled back. Why? At the bottom of each leg lift or kneep you can allow your legs to move down past the plane of your torso in order to hit the rectus abdominis' stretch position. **Cutler** uses the familiar semistretched-point overload technique as follows: 1 x 5-4-1, 1 x 5-3-1, 1 x 6-2-1-1. Between his second and third sets he peels off his shirt for some impromptu posing, and it's an oh-my-God display of vascularity, striations and hugeness that's absolutely mind-boggling!

WORKOUT 2

Calves. Jay begins with a warmup set on the standing calf machine for 16 reps, and on almost every one he does a partial-hitch near the bottom of the rep—almost like a double bounce but with control. Then he does three progressively heavier sets—1 x 6-2-2-2; 1 x 5-2-2-1-1; 1 x 4-2-2-1—rests six seconds, then pushes out three more reps. Note that he uses a rest/pause on that third work set to extend it. He does a final set of 1 x 5-3-1-1 (remember, the hyphens designate **X Reps** embedded in the set).

Now it's on to seated calf raises: 1 x 7-4-2-1. He adds weight and does 1 x 6-3-1-1-1, rests six seconds and then does five reps with **X Reps** on each. His final set is 1 x 6-1-1-1-1-1, and then he reduces the weight and does 2-1-1-1.

Chest. **Cutler** begins his pec work on an incline-fly machine, the type with the roller pads at the crook of each elbow. He does 1 x 4-2-2-1-1-1, adds weight and does 1 x 4-1-1-1-1, adds weight and does 1 x 3-1-1-1. On that last set he pumps out about three **X-Rep** partials at the end of the last rep.

Dumbbell bench presses are next on his agenda. It's really an awesome sight when he lies back with massive dumbbells in his hands and uses the semistretched-overload tactic at the bottom of so many reps. It looks dangerous, but at least with dumbbells he can jettison them if he gets in trouble. He does 1 x 6-2-1, adds weight and does 1 x 4-



Jay uses a double-stretch technique on most of his exercises between reps or groups of reps. Is he triggering a fiber-splitting effect?



He almost never holds contractions, instead focusing on the semistretched position.



2-1, adds weight and does 1 x 5-1-1-1.

Now he goes back to upper-chest work with Smith-machine incline presses, working all reps through the bottom two-thirds of the stroke only (semistretched-point emphasis). Yes, he still employs the **X-Rep**-style pulses between reps or groups of reps. First he pumps out a warmup set of 225 x 4-1-1-1. He adds weight—three 45s on each side—cranks out 1 x 4-1-1, pauses at the top lockout for a few seconds and does two reps. Now comes the money set: He reps 315 x 4-1-1, reduces the weight for 225 x 3-1-1, rests for six seconds, then does 225 x 2-1. Whew! Pec check: They're thick, pumped and striated!

For cable crossovers **Cutler** does 1 x 7-1-1-1 on his first set. Then he adds weight and does 1 x 4-1-1-1-1, reduces the poundage and immediately does 1 x 3-1-1-1. That may be the only exercise on which he squeezes the target muscles in the contracted position, but he limits it to about two reps per set; the rest he works with more semistretched-position emphasis, pulsing the pecs at the top end of the reps.

He finishes off his chest work with some pushups just to stretch his pecs, including lots of **X Reps** performed with his chest near the floor.

WORKOUT 3

Delts. Seated dumbbell laterals are up first, but they really look like seated wide-grip dumbbell upright rows. In other words, he doesn't do them very strictly, but that's how he gets more resistance at the bottom (there's definitely a pattern here). His first set is a warmup: 1 x 7-4-3-2. He adds weight for three more sets, going all the way up to 70s: 50s x 4-1-1-1-1; 60s x 4-1-1-1-1; 70s x 4-1-1-1-1. For the last set he backs off to 65s and does 1 x 4-1-1-1-1-1.

By now there are veins pop-

ping out all over his gnarly delts. Incredible. He goes to seated dumbbell presses, using a seat that has a back support. He ups the weight on every set: 1 x 6-1-1-1; 1 x 5-1-1; 1 x 5-1-1-1.

He only does one set of one-arm behind-the-back cable laterals: 1 x 5-1-1-1-1. He really stresses the bottom X position on these, and you can see the medial head firing at that low position.

Next it's rear-delt-machine laterals for three sets, the last of which is a drop set combined with rest/pause—1 x 6-1-1-1-1; 1 x 5-1-1-1; 1 x 6-1-1-1—then he reduces the weight and does 1 x 4-1-1, rests six seconds and does 1 x 2-1.

He must not have been satisfied with his medial-head pump because he moves to one-arm machine laterals for one set: 1 x 6-1-1-1. Ah, that's better. His delts make him look as wide as an aircraft carrier.

Triceps. A warmup set of rope pushdowns is first—1 x 15 rapid-fire reps but none to full lockout. Then it's on to extra semistretched overload for three sets: 1 x 5-3-1-1-1; 1 x 4-1-1-1-1-1; 1 x 4-1-1-1-1-1. He reduces the weight and does one-arm pushdowns, 1 x 3-1-1-1-1.

More pushdowns, but this time he uses a slightly bent bar and an elbows-flared style. He does two sets of 11 reps, moving the bar through the top range only—lower chest to lower abs.

Time for some stretch work with single-dumbbell overhead extensions: He does 1 x 7-1-1-1, adds weight and then does 1 x 5-1-1; 1 x 5-1-1-1.

He performs two sets of machine dips to finish off his triceps—1 x 8-1-1-1; 1 x 7-1-1-1—with various pauses and partials at the top and bottom of reps.

Biceps. EZ-curl-bar curls are up first, and **Cutler** even does the semistretched-point pauses on the warmup set: 1 x 6-5-4-3. Now he adds weight over three sets: 1 x 6-2-1-1-1; 1 x 4-1-1-1-1-1-1; 1 x 4-1-1-1-1. He reduces the weight by 40 pounds and does 1 x 3-1-1.

For alternate dumbbell curls he leans back against a bench that's slightly inclined. He supinates his hand on every rep—thumb forward

Mass-Building Lessons

So what can we learn from Jay's workouts? As with Ronnie Coleman, it appears that semistretched- and stretched-position overload are extremely important for extreme mass development. I've been dissecting the reasons for that important phenomenon for a while now in the pages of *IRON MAN*, at www.X-Rep.com and in the e-books *Beyond X-Rep Muscle Building* and *The Ultimate Mass Workout*. Where Coleman uses a lot of rapid-fire partials, emphasizing the semistretched point and even using a hitch at that point on every rep of some exercises, Cutler's partial-range technique involves performing a number of semistretched partials between groups of reps or between reps. Research ties stretch-position overload to hyperplasia, or muscle-fiber splitting. Could he be making it happen with his training style? Interesting.

Due to his partial reps, Cutler also gets a lot of continuous tension, which creates occlusion, or blocked blood flow. That triggers a full-blown pump as well as a number of anabolic responses. And keep in mind that it's continuous tension for extended sets. For example, when he does cable crossovers for 1 x 4-1-1-1-1, it lasts much longer than a normal eight-rep set because before each of those singles he pauses and does a few X Reps at the semistretched point. That means his eight reps last as long as a normal 12-to-15-rep set.

I said at the beginning of this feature that we look to the biggest men in the game for muscle-building answers. As this DVD illustrates, Jay Cutler is one of the most massive bodybuilders on the planet—and he's got some interesting answers when it comes to building more muscle, with semistretched-point overload at the top of the list.

To complement his biceps work, Jay hits his brachialis muscles with alternate dumbbell hammer curls, two sets of seven to nine reps. He intersperses the reps with those hitches he likes so much near the bottom of the stroke.

Abs. Jay ends his workout with a variety of abdominal work.

First he does full-range crunches, with his upper back hanging off a bench so he gets a stretch in his rectus abdominis. He doesn't use any weight and performs a lot of double hitches throughout the set near the stretch position: 1 x 5-5-3; 1 x 7-4-3-1-1-1; 1 x 4-2-1-1-1-1-1.

He gets lower-ab stretch with leg-ups on a flat bench, allowing his feet to move down past the plane of his torso to the floor. He does the bottom range of the stroke only, three sets of 14 reps.

To end his ab workout, he does those sideways oblique/serratus crunches on the floor, two sets of 12 with double hitches at the semistretched point on a number of reps.

Cutler was one week out from the Arnold Classic when this DVD was shot, so after his workout he goes into the locker room for some posing practice. I won't describe it, but I will say that you won't believe your eyes—and you will be motivated!

Editor's note: Jay Cutler's two-disc "**Ripped to Shreds**" DVD (three hours, 15 minutes) is available from Home Gym Warehouse at a special price: \$29.95 plus shipping (regularly \$39.95; you save \$10!). Call (800) 447-0008 or visit www

[.HomeGym.com](http://www.HomeGym.com) to order. For more on **X-Rep** training, occlusion and semistretched overload, visit www.X-Rep.com. **IM**



This Interesting incline curl machine gives Cutler a unique biceps stretch.



at the bottom, rotating the dumbbell as he curls till his palm is up at the top. He does one set of eight reps, adds weight and does a second set of six.

He does machine curls but not on a preacher machine; it's more of an incline-curl simulator for more biceps stretch. He performs only two sets, but the second is a biceps-blistering blast: 1 x 4-1-1-1-1-1; 1 x 4-1-1-1-1-1, reduce the weight for 1 x 4-1-1, rest six seconds and then continue with 3-1-1. It's a drop set with a rest/pause chaser.