



DANTE'S INFERNO

Who Is He, and Why Is Doggcrapp Training Building So Much **Muscle Mass**?

by Ron Harris • Photography by Michael Neveux

Anyone who frequents bodybuilding message boards on the Internet has at least heard of DC, or Doggcrapp, training. Not since the late Mike **Mentzer's Heavy Duty** appeared in the 1980s has an abbreviated style of training generated so much interest. Part of the reason is DC training's most visible success story, IFBB pro Dave Henry, who grew from a 170-pound middleweight to a 205-pounder in a mere two years, and who credits his new mass to DC training and the man behind it, Dante.

Thousands of bodybuilders have used DC training with great success,

and to say it is building a cult following wouldn't be inaccurate. Being intrigued and a bit confused myself as to what DC training is all about, I went straight to the source so that *IRON MAN* readers can get an idea of what it's all about, why it works so well, and how willing you need to be to throw convention to the wind to follow it to the letter. Just as the literary classic *The Inferno* takes readers into a bizarre and frightening realm, so this Dante offers to take you to a new level of muscle size and power. If you're ready to make your descent into the pit, let the journey begin.

Neveux \ Model: Ray Campisi



DC training's most visible success story is IFBB pro David Henry, who grew from a 170-pound middleweight to a 205-pounder in a mere two years.

Bealix

RH: Would you please tell us a little bit about yourself? Let's start with Dante: Is that your actual name or an alias?

D: That is my actual name. It's my middle name, but it's what I go by.

RH: Do you have a background in sports, and how did you get involved in bodybuilding?

D: I have always been a good athlete in every sport, but back in junior high school something strange happened. I stopped growing. I was the third-shortest person out of about 1,000 people in my high school, and I was a complete stick to boot. My freshman year I was 92 pounds, and I ended up graduating at 5'7" and a strapping, robust 122 pounds. [Laughs] I had always excelled at basketball and baseball but found it very tough going, being so small. I grew 5.5 inches after high school and wound up weighing 137 pounds at 6' tall when I was 19 years old.

While driving my car in my hometown of Gardner,

Massachusetts, one day, I saw two-time AAU Mr. Massachusetts (and AAU America and NABBA Universe competitor) Donnie Lemiux. The man was monstrous at 5'7" and a lean 240 pounds, and I was shocked to see someone look like that. I was determined right then and there to put my nose to the grindstone, and I researched and studied every single facet of bodybuilding I could find, from the basics to the molecular level. Donnie Lemiux actually became my training partner later on, and to this day we remain great friends.

RH: Did you publish your own newsletter at one point?

D: Yes. I published *Hardcore Muscle* from 1993 to 1995, and that's when I started to first put my thoughts on multirep rest/pause and other theories out to the public. It was a very cutting-edge newsletter, and I was very proud to say that my readership was like a who's who in bodybuilding at that time. I had a whole slew of pros, top amateurs, doctors and researchers

on the subscriber list. I was on the phone with Phil Herson, Tom Prince, Curtis Leffler and many other competing bodybuilders, gathering information for each issue.

RH: Have you competed in powerlifting or bodybuilding? If not, do you have any desire to?

D: Three times in the past few years I have dieted down for shows, and every time I pulled out for the same reasons. I've had two jobs for a long time now, usually working seven days a week, and I just get absolutely burned out with the hour of training and up to two hours of cardio I need daily to come into shows absolutely shredded to the bone. I admire anyone who can compete in today's society, working 40 to 60 hours a week, because I know I sure as heck can't do it. This last time, in early 2005, I was determined to follow through, and I went from 292 pounds to 258 in 15 weeks, but at five weeks out my father was diagnosed with a tumor on his liver, and my wife,

who was competing in figure, and I both pulled out of the show. Bodybuilding shows come and go, but family is forever. That was an easy decision to make, and, luckily, my father was operated on and is in good health now.

RH: How and why did you come up with DC training? Had you grown frustrated with other styles of training? Did DC training evolve over time?

D: I started out with the old volume-training concepts just like everyone else does who reads what Arnold and the boys did and what the magazines put out there as the golden rules. But, eventually, I got to a point where I started thinking, "There is no rhyme or reason to this." It all seemed based on obsessive-compulsiveness instead of deductive reasoning. I think a lot of modern-day bodybuilding

"People are doing every foo-foo exercise under the sun thinking it bombs muscles from all angles, and all they're doing most of the time is wasting energy."

routines are built on the must principle, which is basically fanatical bodybuilders thinking, "I

must do inclines and declines and cable crossovers and flat bench and pec deck and flyes for chest

this workout, or I won't have all the bases covered and I won't grow." I think that's flat-out wrong.

DC training did evolve over time as I trained more and more bodybuilders and noted their results. Back in the early '90s it was based on the same concepts as it is today but used slightly more volume. Through trial and error over the past 13 years or so I've honed it to what you see today.

RH: Why the Doggcrapp? I mean, from a marketing point of view, people will remember it, but didn't you have second

DC training is a multi-rep rest/pause system using mostly compound movements.



Model: Robert Hatch

Henry's recent physique improvements can at least partially be attributed to DC training techniques.



Comstock

thoughts that the name would be mocked?

D: Yeah, that was a real ingenious move on my part, wasn't it? I definitely should be nominated Idiot of the Year for that one.

[Laughs] What happened was, six years ago I was a member of a small but elite bodybuilding board on the Net that had about 50 members. I never posted; I just read the posts. I had viewed some posts by advanced bodybuilders on that board that I felt were very detrimental toward their health. I decided to respond and posted with the anonymous screen name of Doggcrapp. I

thought it would be one post and kaput, done and over with. Man, was I ever wrong!

People were intrigued with what I had to say and kept asking questions. I kept answering, and it became a virtual encyclopedia. That post became 118 pages long and had over a quarter of a million views. My posts back then were cut and pasted onto bodybuilding sites all over the net, people started using my methods and gaining rapidly, telling friends, and it carried on through word of mouth like a wildfire. Sad to say, I'm stuck with the name Doggcrapp now. If I could do it all over again—trust me—I

would have given myself a much classier name.

RH: I'm sure. What are the basic principles of DC training?

D: Heavy, progressive weights; lower volume but higher frequency of bodypart hits; multirep rest/pause training; extreme stretching; carb cutoffs; cardio; high-protein intake and blasting and cruising phases—periodization.

RH: Can you give me an example of how the bodyparts might be arranged in a typical training week?

D: For the majority of

DC Training, Bodypart by Bodypart

Chest

Smith-machine incline presses, 11 to 15 rest/pause reps
Hammer Strength presses, 11 to 15 rest/pause reps
Decline barbell presses, 11 to 15 rest/pause reps

Back width

Rack chins, 11 to 20 rest/pause reps
Close-undergrip pulldowns, 11 to 15 rest/pause reps
Front pulldowns, 11 to 15 rest/pause reps

Back thickness*

Deadlifts, straight sets: 6-9 reps, 9-12 reps
T-bar rows straight set: 10-12 reps
Rack deadlifts, straight sets: 6-9 reps, 9-12 reps

*Back thickness exercises aren't rest/paused for safety reasons—fatigue and loss of form.

Shoulders

Military presses, 11 to 20 rest/pause reps
Hammer Strength presses, 11 to 15 rest/pause reps
Upright rows, 11 to 20 rest/pause reps

Quads*

Free-bar squats, straight set: 6-10; rest 3-5 minutes; 20-rep widow maker
Hack squats (same as described for squats)
Leg presses (same as described for squats)

*Quad exercises aren't rest/paused for safety reasons—fatigue and loss of form—but after progressive warmups you do a heavy set and then what I call a 20-rep “widow maker” set with a moderately heavy weight.

Hamstrings

Lying leg curls, 15 to 30 rest/pause reps
Seated leg curls, 15 to 30 rest/pause reps
Sumo leg presses (pressing with heels only), straight set: 15-25 reps

Biceps

Preacher curls, 11 to 20 rest/pause reps
Barbell drag curls, 11 to 20 rest/pause reps
Dumbbell curls, 11 to 20 rest/pause reps

Forearms

Pinwheel curls, straight set: 10-20 reps
Hammer curls, straight set: 10-20 reps
Reverse-grip one-arm cable curls, straight set: 10-20 reps

Triceps

Reverse-grip bench presses, 11 to 20 rest/pause reps
Close-grip bench presses, 11 to 20 rest/pause reps
EZ-curl bar triceps extensions, 15 to 30 rest/pause reps (higher reps for elbow safety)

Calves*

Leg press toe presses, 10-12 reps
Hack squat toe presses, 10-12 reps
Seated calf raises, 10-12 reps

*All calf exercises are done with an enhanced negative, meaning up on big toe, five seconds lowering to full stretch followed by a brutal 10 to 15 seconds in the stretched position and then back up on the big toe again. It really separates the mice from the men!

bodybuilders who are in need of size, the following works the best:

Monday: Chest, shoulders, triceps, back width, back thickness

Wednesday: Biceps, forearms, calves, hamstrings, quads

Friday: Repeat Monday's workout

Monday: Repeat Wednesday's workout

That way, you hit bodyparts twice every eight days or so. For advanced bodybuilders—and by that I mean very elite bodybuilders and extremely strong people—I sometimes go with the following:

Monday: Chest, shoulders, triceps

Tuesday: Biceps, forearms, back width, back thickness

Thursday: Calves, hams, quads

Friday: Repeat Monday's workout

Monday: Repeat Tuesday's workout

Tuesday: Repeat Thursday's workout

That way, you hit bodyparts twice every nine days or so. I can work on advanced bodybuilders' lagging bodyparts somewhat better with that split.

RH: One very radical aspect of DC training is that there are no isolation movements. How do you answer those who believe muscles need to be worked from several angles at each workout for complete development?

D: Let me clarify that. My trainees have kind of put the notion out there that no isolation exercises are ever being used. I honestly don't care what exercise someone uses as long as he can be progressive on it over time. If someone really believes in an exercise, then he can use it. Obviously, a dumbbell kickback, on which you can hypothetically go from 15 to 45 pounds, is going to be



Model: Tito Raymond

“My choice would always be a free-weight exercise over a machine if it can be done safely.”

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a lot less effective than a close-grip bench press, where you can start at 200 pounds and end up at 405 in my scheme of doing things. It all comes down to the Must Principle and obsessive-compulsiveness.

When Ronnie Coleman came into this sport from powerlifting, did anyone see big gaps of muscle

missing from his physique? Is Johnnie Jackson playing catchup with certain bodyparts from powerlifting all those years? I don't

see distinct weaknesses in their physiques. They were just somewhat smaller versions of what you see today.

People are doing every foo-foo exercise under the sun thinking it bombs muscles from all angles, and in my opinion all they're doing most of the time is wasting energy

resources. Once you reach a growth response in a workout, then pretty much everything you do after that just cuts into recovery time and burns up glycogen—and, God forbid, muscle mass.

A few decades ago Steve Michalik and his gang were doing up to 100 sets per bodypart—and with elite genetics to boot—yet saw absolutely no difference in size or advanced development from what the people doing 20, 15, 10, five or even one set per bodypart, like Mentzer, got.


RH: Could you walk us through a set, DC style? Let's assume trainees are properly warmed up and ready to do a set on, say, close-grip lat pulldowns.

D: They would explosively pull the bar down to their chest, and then on the negative return they would resist, or control, on the way up. I don't want specific seconds or a certain time range; I just want control on the negative to the point that if they had to, they could easily reverse direction.

They would keep going to the point in the set where they would reach failure, hopefully between reps seven and 10. At that point they would take 10 to 15 deep breaths—usually 22 seconds or somewhere in that area—and then resume the exercise and go to failure once again. Then another 10 to 15 deep breaths, and then once again to failure.

During the rest/pauses you do not stay strapped to the bar or anything. You take your 10 to 15 deep breaths and then get back in there. Oxygen is the key here. What I'm looking for in a rest/pause set usually is a total of 11 to 15 rest/pause reps, with three failure points in the set. That usually comes out to something like eight reps to failure, then 10 to 15 breaths, four more reps to failure, then 10 to 15 breaths, and a final two reps to failure for a total of 14 reps—which comes into the category of 11 to 15 rest/pause reps.

RH: Because of the rest/pause nature of DC training, there tends to be a good mix of machines in your programs. Do you believe that machines like those made by Hammer Strength can stimulate muscle



“Repeating something you’ve already done will not force your body to grow further.”

Model: Mike Diegla

growth as effectively as barbells and dumbbells?

D: I would like to see everyone build a base and use free weights whenever possible. If someone has a training partner, there’s no worry at all using free weights with my methods. But sometimes my trainees don’t have a spotter, and in those cases I try to set them up on machines that they can “save” themselves on while going to the three failure points during a rest/pause set.

For example, it’s very easy to save yourself on a Smith-machine incline press at a failure point. You just turn the bar and latch the weight. I would hate to see one of my trainees doing free-weight barbell incline presses with a guillotine bar on his neck at failure, having no way to

get out of it and not being able to scream for help. Regardless, a lot of people misconstrue this as a love for machines, when in actuality I’m trying to keep safety in mind for someone who does not have a spotter. It’s as simple as that. My choice would always be a free-weight exercise over a machine if it can be done safely. That’s why I tend to use power racks and Smith machines a lot.

RH: Here’s a direct quote from an Internet hater regarding DC training: “It’s a lazy man’s training program guaranteed to turn you into a fat tub of lard.” How do you respond to a statement like that?

D: Well, with any training routine, regardless if it’s mine or someone

else’s, if you throw cardio to the wayside and eat like a glutton, you’re going to end up with an accumulation of adipose tissue, or bodyfat. I’ve seen many people use different training methods who ended up eating gross amounts of the wrong types of food thinking that’s the secret. They became fat piles of lard and blamed it on the training routine instead of the real reasons—lack of cardio and an idiotic diet.

RH: How is DC training fundamentally different from other abbreviated-training systems like Heavy Duty?

D: To be honest, that question always rankles me. The HIT advocates love to shove anything that’s a lower-volume-training

routine under their gigantic HIT umbrella. I don't believe in Mentzer's theories. I think he went off the deep end later in his life, getting fanatical about overtraining, and in no way do I want to be associated with HIT protocols.

My methods are lower volume but extremely heavy. My whole mentality is based around progression over time. The normal bodybuilder trains a bodypart 52 times a year, or once a week. My clients train bodyparts 75 to 92 times a year; hence, each bodypart gets growth stimulation 75 to 92 times a year instead of 52. That's how I'm getting these guys up in muscle size so fast. I can't have them doing 15 to 20 sets per bodypart, or I won't be able to get them recovered, which defeats the purpose of all this. So it's heavy, progressive, lower-volume training planned with recovery in mind in order to get the guys training each bodypart frequently.

People have such a hard time grabbing this low-volume-per-workout concept, but in actuality, I'm doing the same things that most volume trainers out there are doing, if they would only look at the big picture. They might be doing four different exercises for their back in today's workout, hitting back once a week. I'm doing those same four exercises in a week's time, but in two separate workouts while training back twice in a week.

RH: From talking with Dave Henry, I understand that record keeping and beating the numbers from the previous week are critical components of DC training. Can you explain why?

D: Progression, simply progression. Some people go into the gym with no plan at all and just absolutely wing it. I've never understood that. I bet any money that if I logged their workouts, two

weeks later, or six weeks later, or even 12 weeks later, when they do those same exercises again, they are probably using the same 120 pounds or 225 pounds or 315 pounds they used previously. That's not progression! Nothing has changed.

Repeating something you've already done will not force your body to grow further. That's a waste of time, in my opinion. With my methods you are held accountable for today's workouts vs. the last time you did this workout. Trust me, when you have that kind of imperative and your logbook is your

archenemy, you are in for the fight of your life! You have the man in the mirror to answer to.

Do you want to drive home knowing the logbook kicked your ass or knowing you destroyed the logbook and showed it who the damn boss is? My trainees look back sometimes on their logbooks and find out that they are 50 to 200 pounds higher on those exercises than they were months earlier. What does that equal out to? Adaptation and rapid muscle mass accumulation.

RH: Very nice. Do you think a



Models: Hubert Morandell and Markus Reinhardt

"You pretty much get to a point where you're tricking your body into becoming muscularly larger."



Model: Yohanne Shambourger

into heavyweights. I think a lot of people are coming to realize that with all the posts and photos online involving my methods, the old notion that you can only gain eight to 10 pounds of lean mass a year is complete and utter bunk. I can't remember a trainee who has been with me for a whole year and has gained less than 15 pounds of lean tissue.

I did have a trainee who came to me after an injury, so he had obviously lost some muscle mass, but I saw the before and after pictures with bodyfat percentage measured, and eight months later he had gained 67 pounds. And he was completely natural. To this day that shocks me.

Those are elite genetics, though, and for anybody reading this article, I'm telling you straight out: There ain't a chance in hell I can repeat that with everyone. In my mind that was and is still virtually impossible. I have made many, many, people 30 to 50 pounds heavier in a year's time, but for that to happen, you have to be absolutely meticulous and follow exactly what I want you to do—which is pretty much to eat like a 300-pounder but do cardio like a guy who is 8 to 9 percent bodyfat and turn

“My whole concept is based on blasting and cruising—a maintenance phase of 10 to 14 days.”

person would get better results with DC training than with standard volume training if he were using steroids or not using steroids? Or would it have no impact either way?

D: To be totally honest, anyone using steroids on any training routine is going to advance faster than if he did it au naturel. End of story.

RH: Obviously, Dave Henry is the most visible example

of what can be done with DC training. Can you list other specific examples of the gains your clients have made?

D: I have seen some pretty amazing things I don't even have an answer for. [Laughs]. I've seen a person have his bodyfat measured before and after a year, when it was a little over 1 percent higher, and in that time he had gained 52 pounds. I've made numerous light heavies into superheavies. I've made numerous middleweights

your body into a muscle-building, fat-burning blast furnace. You pretty much get to a point where you're tricking your body into becoming muscularly larger.

RH: Obviously you don't have to name names if you aren't comfortable doing it, but are there any other pros or top amateurs you're working with or have worked with as a trainer?

D: There's another pro besides

Dave Henry, but due to his sponsor's contract rulings, I don't mention him publicly. I've also trained PNBA Natural pro Travis MacDuff. As far as top amateurs, how much space do we have? Junior Nationals champ Ralph Garcia, top NPC USA competitor Rob Lopez, Junior USA champion Jason Wojciechowski, plus Tom Whorley, Josh Barnett, Joey Mobareki, Jason Hamner, Chris Genkinger, Scott Stevenson, Robert Hopper, Joey Bonacia, Stone Laszly, Ramey Benfield, Mike Piacentino, Jason Torres, and a whole slew of others, including Canadian and European champions like two-time Swiss champion Ivan Gasser.

RH: Do you train anyone in person? Are you available as such, or do you prefer to do everything online and on the phone?

D: I used to train people in person, but this is just a side job for me, and I usually reject 70 percent of the people who contact me regarding training them. I'm very particular as to who I work with. They have to have the right mind-set—very determined to succeed—and it's my way or no way. This is my reputation on the line, and I'm not going to screw with it by taking on someone who isn't going to listen to me. I'll train a genetically gifted pro or I'll train someone with genetics like Woody Allen's—it does not matter to me. I just need to feel that we will work well together, so I have an extensive questionnaire everyone must fill out before I make my decision.

RH: Where do you stand on cardio? Do you believe everyone should do it year-round, that those trying to gain mass shouldn't do it at all, or that bodybuilders should never do it?

D: I believe highly in cardio, almost universally. The problem with most bodybuilders is that it's the first thing they skip. The only people I believe should not be doing cardio are some severely ectomorphic types with fast metabolisms. Almost everyone else should do it—to varying degrees, depending on the individual.

It's very hard to give blanket recommendations without knowing anything about an individual, of course. One of the staples I've found through training people who had a difficult time gaining weight is to do your cardio first thing in the morning. When I had trainees do cardio, walking on a treadmill or around the neighborhood the first thing upon arising, they would be as hungry as a bull during the rest of the day and would eat so much that they'd finally gain muscular weight. Prior to that they couldn't gain weight when they weren't doing cardio because their appetite was lacking.

RH: I also understand that you don't believe in the concept of bulking up, correct?

D: I am trying to get people to put on as much muscle mass in the shortest amount of time possible. I don't believe *anyone* should become a fat pile of crap in that quest. I have people eating gross amounts of food up to a new level in size, but I limit bodyfat gain by limiting carbs at times during the day, food combining, cardio, carb cutoffs and using certain fat-burning supplements like green tea. My trainees most likely eat more food than *(continued on page 140)*





Model: Todd Smith

“To follow DC training, you have to be a bulldog, no doubt about it. And above all else you need to de-brainwash yourself.”

(continued from page 137) people who are bulking up, per se, but I am adamant about not letting them use the bulking-up excuse to become sumo wrestlers in the off-season.

RH: Do you believe in taking scheduled layoffs from training?

D: Yes, my whole concept is based on blasting and cruising. I have every trainee blast for six to 12 weeks, all out, and then do a cruising phase of maintenance training for 10 to 14 days, sometimes 21, depending on how long their blast was. It has to be done. The people who try to go all out all year-round are the ones who go into overtraining mode and eventually lose their gains.

RH: Should bodybuilders stay on the DC style of training year-round, or do you recommend phases where they do something different, like higher-volume work or a routine that features more isolation exercises?

D: I think as long as they blast and cruise correctly—some obsessive-compulsive bodybuilders refuse to do so—they can do DC-style training year-round.

RH: As Dave Henry put it, DC training isn't for everybody. What type of traits would you

say an individual needs to successfully follow it?

D: You have to be a bulldog, no doubt about it. And above all else you need to de-brainwash yourself of the notions that everyone in this sport has, notions that come from being taught from an obsessive-compulsive viewpoint. And I think you have to be a little bit crazy. If you're two bolts short of a car wreck, DC training is for you, Jack!

RH: I doubt it's possible to put a number on how many bodybuilders are using DC training or have used it, but it does seem to be gaining momentum. Could you see a day when it will become as widespread as standard volume training?

D: God, I hope not! I'm already overwhelmed and have too much on my plate. I had absolutely no idea of Dave Henry's following and fan base until I started training him two years ago. Every time he does really well in shows, my e-mails go thru the roof. He just got second at the *IRON MAN* Pro, and I'm getting e-mail from Africa, Europe, all over the place, about DC training.

RH: Do you have any books or videos available on your program, or are any in the works?

D: I believe Dave Henry is doing

a DC-training video pretty soon, so that will be available in the future. I really should put a book out there for people to read, but right now I have a rare disease that is keeping me from doing so. It's called "being a slacker." In all seriousness, my articles online are in the process of being copyrighted, so I'll get some of the literature into book form as soon as I can free up some time.

RH: You are also the owner of a supplement company, True Protein (www.TrueProtein.com). I hear that it's a little different from the average supplement company in a few ways, right?

D: We are very different. We will give buyers the highest-quality supplements for the best prices they will find. We are able to do this by buying the highest-testing products in large amounts to get the price we want and then packaging them in food-grade jugs or storage bags. The buyer wins because he isn't paying for the \$5,000-per-page advertising campaign, the fancy jug label or the fancy packaging. People walk into nutrition centers now and plop down 30 dollars for two pounds of whey protein concentrate. Compare that with two pounds of a top-tested whey protein concentrate from True Protein, which is going to cost you about \$8.

RH: I hope this interview will solve the mystery of the mysterious Dante and give people a clear overview of what DC training is all about. I thank you very much for speaking with me.

D: We Massachusetts guys have to stick together, Ron! Thanks for the interview.

Note: For the *IRON MAN* Training and Research Center's take on DC training and related mass-building techniques, see page 76.

Editor's note: The official DC training Web site is www.intensemuscle.com. Send online training inquiries to DC @cyber-rights.net. **IM**