

HEALTH AND VITALITY THROUGH EXERCISE AND NUTRITION

JOHN PARRILLO'S

# PERFORMANCE

## PRESS

June 2019

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### STAFF

**Publisher**  
John Parrillo

**Design Director**  
Marcus McCuiston

**Editor At Large**  
Marty Gallagher

**Contributing Photographers**  
John Parrillo  
Dominique Parrillo  
Marcus McCuiston

**Contributing Writers**  
John Parrillo  
Marty Gallagher  
Dr. Jeremy Girmann  
Scott Canatsey  
Andre Newcomb  
Iron Vic Steele  
Ron Harris

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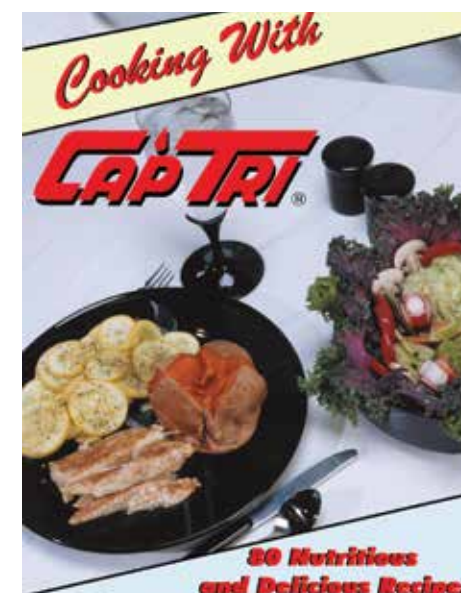
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# MIGUEL LOPEZ

A lifelong athlete turns to bodybuilding

By Marty Gallagher



■ Miguel Lopez was born in Puerto Rico in 1993. As a youngster he was athletic, energetic and tall for his age. Blessed with quick reflexes and a loads of fast-twitch muscle fiber, he was a natural for volleyball and basketball. "I discovered I could leap. At age 15 I could dunk and by age 16 I could windmill dunk." This is a huge indicator of Miguel's great genetics. Another indicator of great genetics was his admission that he has always been naturally lean. "I had a hyper active metabolism because I was hyper-active. As a kid, I naturally held an 8% body fat percentile eating anything I wanted and as much as I wanted." Natural leanness is a great attribute for a future bodybuilder. "The downside to my fast metabolism was that it has always been difficult for me to add muscle." In high school he gained his full height of 6'2" and as a star basketball player terrorized opposing high school teams as a run-and-gun shooting guard. Miguel won a full-ride college scholarship. "I came stateside to attend school on a basketball scholarship. I went to college in upstate New York. It was quite a culture shock." One can only imagine shifting from sunny beaches and incredibly good indigenous food to 9-degree February days with this strange new white stuff Miguel had never seen before: snow. Miguel also got serious about his studies.

Miguel was not a lunkheaded, one-dimensional collage athlete, he was extremely bright and did well all through school. "I took an interest in my education and I am naturally curious. I had ambitions that required a higher education." Miguel graduated college with a 3.96 GPA. He decided to get serious about fitness. "I played college ball weighing around 180-pounds. After graduating, there was a lack of physical activity in my life. For over a decade I had played organized sports all year long. I had played at a high level in both basketball and volleyball in high school and college. Then one day,

nothing. One day you are done with all that." Miguel had done his research and decided that he would fill this athletic void with bodybuilding. "I really looked into the differing forms of bodybuilding; there is so much conflicting information out there, it is extremely confusing. However, it didn't really matter. Right when I was ready to launch my comprehensive bodybuilding effort, I tore my rotator cuff in spiking a ball in volleyball. At the time, I had no idea how big a deal this would be." It turned out to be a very big deal. It took Miguel nine long months of rehab to "get back to zero."

During this time, Miguel had, in his words, "Gotten in the worst shape of my life. It was months of not being able to do anything. For the first and only time in my life, I became 'skinny-fat,' I had ballooned to a 12% body fat percentile while shrinking to a muscleless 180-pounds." Miguel could not wait for the day he would be given the okay to begin training. "While rehabbing I took the opportunity to purchase and virtually memorize

## John Parrillo's Performance Press

Arnold's massive Encyclopedia of Bodybuilding." Once he has given the go-ahead, Miguel hit the ground running. "I had it all planned out. I used my nine months to craft a diet and exercise plan based on Arnold's training. The moment I was okayed, I launched. I began weight training twice a day, using Arnold's famous (or infamous) double-split routine. My first session would be at 5 am and my second weight training session was at 4 pm." Six days a week Miguel was weight training twice a day – and he also did cardio. "I built an incredible 35-pounds of muscle in a year. Then nothing, crickets, minimal progress." He was new to the game and was unaware that lifting, cardio and nutrition need be periodically altered to avoid stagnation: all protocols, no matter how effective, eventually cease delivering results and need be rotated with other protocols. Miguel had thrown himself into the deep end of the bodybuilding pool right off the bat and needed a new approach. "I was new to bodybuilding. I had done some weight training connected to

sports, but I never seriously got into real bodybuilding till after basketball. I built up so much repressed energy during my nine-month rotator cuff rehab that as soon as I was cleared, I was hitting the gym twice a day, six days a week. I also took on a real, Parrillo-style bodybuilder diet. I would perform cardio maybe three times a week. I would use the HIT cardio approach, high intensity cardio done in short duration sessions."

Within a year Miguel dropped his body fat percentile from 12% to 8%. That's what happens when a restless athlete goes buck wild after nine months of enforced inactivity. "After a year my gains stopped. It was a great program and I had a great run, and now my progress was stalled." Miguel had gotten a job as IT Project Manager with a Fortune 500 corporation, Proctor & Gamble and relocated to Cincinnati. He found a local gym to train at and lucky for Miguel, he was at the gym when bodybuilding star Wilson Martinez stopped by unplanned and unannounced. "I



Within a year Miguel dropped his body fat percentile from 12% to 8%. That's what happens when a restless athlete goes buck wild after nine months of enforced inactivity.



"My second show was my Pro debut. By winning the overall at the Cincinnati Natural, I had won a Pro card in my first show. At the NGA Kentucky Natural show, I weighed 205-pounds sporting a 5% body fat percentile: I was in the best shape of my life..."

had been stagnant for six months when I happen to see this gigantic, ripped guy, obviously a high-level bodybuilder." Miguel approached the big man and introduced himself. He asked, 'Hey Wilson will you give me some advice, I am spinning my wheels.' Miguel related that Wilson was eager to help. "He got me on a new diet, he revamped my training and he motivated me. I had been less than enthused and now I was on fire again. People at the gym were like, 'Hey, Miguel, you are looking really good – are you planning on competing soon?' I had never even been to a bodybuilding show." With his lean, athletic, proportional physique, Miguel was a natural for the Classic Physique division.

"I had no desire to add tons of mass.

I consider myself a functional athlete. However, when I discovered that there was a division where the judging protocols favored my type of build, I was intrigued." After checking it out further and consulting with Wilson, Miguel made the decision to compete. "Before I met Wilson, I had spent six months going backwards. I added ten pounds, most of it was body fat. I was confused. Wilson straightened me out." Wilson took Miguel training and nutrition to the next level. Miguel began to look around for a competition. He decided to compete in the Classic Physique division. It was important and to understand what the judges were looking for. Miguel couldn't be too big, and he couldn't be too small. When the decision was made to compete, Wilson bought in an old friend, Vic Simms, to school

Miguel on posing. "I found that there were three competitions within the same month. I decided to compete in all three." Pretty audacious for a man that had never competed before. While this seems overly ambitious, remember that Miguel is the same guy that began bodybuilding with the most bone-crushing workout split ever devised: the Arnold double-split. With three shows in a row Miguel was really putting himself on the spot.

"I had to get dialed in quickly. Each workout had to be better than the last, each week needed to be better than the week before." As the shows drew closer, Vic bought in Parrillo Performance Training Center head trainer, Scott Canatsey. "Scott was the final piece to the preparation process. We were leaving nothing to chance."

Scott was bought in to consult about "peak week," those last crucial 7-10 days before the actual show. If the proper balance is struck between nutrition, weight-training, hydration, supplementation and cardio, the bodybuilder will step onstage 5% better than before beginning peak week. Scott has peaked himself and other bodybuilders for competitions for years. Scott knows all the right and wrong things to do and not do in the last week. It all came together seamlessly when Miguel made his debut at the NGA Cincinnati Natural. In this first show he entered both the Classic Physique division and the Men's Physique division. In the Men's Physique Miguel took 1st in the Novice division and 3rd in the Open division. In the Classic Physique division, he won the Novice, Open and was declared the overall champion. Miguel could not have had a more auspicious debut. Mind-blowing, yet with another show coming up, Miguel had no time to dwell on his incredible showing: he had to remain perfect and show up in even better shape.

"My second show was my Pro debut. By winning the overall at the Cincinnati Natural, I had won a Pro card in my first show. At the NGA Kentucky Natural show, I weighed 205-pounds sporting a 5% body fat percentile: I was in the best shape of my life. Miguel won the Pro division. "It could not have gone better." On April 27th in his third show in a month's time, Miguel missed the title by a whisker. "I finished in 2nd place by 1 point!" Miguel was simultaneously disappointed and fired up, "I almost grabbed the title of Mr. Ohio 2019 in my third ever show! This contest was called the NPF Battle of Ohio. Now my streak has come to an end." Asked what his next competitive move would be, he indicated he will spend this summer "gaining more mass and working on my weak areas." Which is bad news for his competition. Being young and smart and fired up to stay in this game, Miguel has nowhere to go but up.



**TRAINING SPLIT**

- Monday — shoulders, chest
- Tuesday — legs, back
- Wednesday — off
- Thursday — chest, shoulders
- Friday — back, arms
- Saturday — legs
- Sunday — off

**DAILY MEAL SCHEDULE**

- Meal 1: (3:30 am) — turkey, cream of rice, asparagus Parrillo Fish Oil, Calcium Pyruvate
- Meal 2: (4:45 am) — Parrillo Muscle Amino Formula™, raisins, banana
- Meal 3: (6:15 am) — Parrillo Creatine Monohydrate™, Parrillo Optimized Whey™ shake, rice milk
- Meal 4: (8:30 am) — egg whites with two yolks, sweet potato, broccoli, almonds
- Meal 5: (11:30 am) — chicken breast, quinoa, black beans, almonds, Parrillo Essential Vitamin Formula™
- Meal 6: (2:30 pm) — turkey, cream of rice, asparagus
- Meal 7: (3:45 pm) — Parrillo Muscle Amino Formula™, raisins, banana
- Meal 8: (5:15 pm) — Parrillo Creatine Monohydrate™, Optimized Whey™ shake, rice milk
- Meal 9: (7:15 pm) — egg whites, 2 yolks, oatmeal, broccoli and avocado



# DON'T GIVE UP! 4 ways to keep gaining when you need to go lighter on compound movements

By Ron Harris

Sooner or later it will happen. Either an injury or a more insidious long-term degradation of the joints like arthritis will force you to lighten up considerably on the meat-and-potato compound movements that built most of your muscle mass. That's when a lot of people just give up and quit lifting. They assume there's just no way to maintain their size and still have that elite physique they worked so long and hard for. As someone who has been through the gauntlet and came out the other side, I have some tips on how you can maintain – or even gain – even when you can't go nearly as heavy on exercises like chest and shoulder presses or squats anymore.

## 1. DO THE COMPOUND MOVEMENTS LAST

Most of us are so accustomed to doing lifts like the bench press or squats first in a workout that it never occurs to us to do them last. That's crazy, you won't be able to use anywhere near as much weight! That's the whole point. Your shoulders might not be able to handle a 315-pound bench press anymore, but they might be okay with 225. If you do all your other exercises for chest first, that 225 will feel just as heavy on your pecs as 315 used to. Same deal with squats. Hammer your legs with leg extensions and curls and leg presses before you squat, and you can make them work your legs just as hard without putting anywhere near as much strain on your knees and lower back by using less resistance.

## 2. SLOW THE REPS DOWN

One simple yet highly effective way to make any exercise feel heavier is to slow the rep tempo. Rather than exploding the weight up, squeeze

it up, forcefully feeling the target muscle contract every inch of the way. An added bonus is that if you've always struggled to master the mind-muscle connection or get a deep pump and burn in the target muscle, this will do the trick.

## 3. SHORTEN YOUR REST PERIODS

Another way to increase the stress on a target muscle is to perform multiple sets with very little rest between them. Let's say you were capable of bench pressing 315 pounds for 10 reps before a shoulder injury, and now it's not safe to go any heavier than 225. Ten reps with that might feel too light, but try going again for ten reps with only 30 seconds

rest. Then do it again, and again. I guarantee that fourth set with 225 will have your pecs screaming and will have those muscle fibers convinced they were just pushing up 315.

## 4. USE MACHINES

Maybe you just can't bench press or squat with a barbell anymore. While free weights will always be the gold standard for building both size and strength, that doesn't mean machines can't also be highly effective training tools. Try every machine in your gym and you're bound to find a few that will challenge various muscle groups and hit them just right. You can load them up with some decent weight and get back to the business of making gains!



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## Is fasted cardio best?

By Dr. Jeremy Girmann

This month's question comes from Performance Press reader, Andrew:

*"I heard that fasted cardio will help me to burn more fat compared to cardio that is done after I eat. Is this true?"*

Ah...the cardio conundrum. Before answering this question directly, let me start with a few general thoughts on cardio (with the assumption that 'cardio' refers to moderately prolonged aerobic activity such as running, biking, swimming, etc).

Most simply, I like it...

There are those who choose not to include cardio in their exercise routines, opting instead to focus solely on weight training. I happen to be okay with this, particularly if the weight training is done at an appropriate tempo and with sufficient intensity because lifting weights in this way can significantly elevate one's heart rate and serve as aerobic activity, essentially killing two birds with one stone.

I do, however, find that the inclusion of dedicated aerobic exercise provides several benefits, which I'll describe from the perspective of personal experience.

Perhaps most intuitively, it

strengthens the heart and the lungs. Without getting too technical, it's a use it or lose it sort of thing. We were made to move, elevate our heart rate, and breath heavily for periods of time. The more consistently you do it, the easier it becomes. We shouldn't be gasping for air after climbing a single flight of stairs.

Second, it can stimulate a healthy appetite. If gaining/maintaining muscle while staying lean is the goal, cardio can heighten your hunger for the good stuff. While this is anecdotal and perhaps not true for all, I find that cardio often stimulates an appetite for healthy foods. The body is smart. When treated properly, it demands what it needs most – nutrient dense foods.

Third, it makes you smarter. Really? Maybe...I can't remember. While we jog on a treadmill or spin on a bike, thousands of incredible reactions are taking place within our brains. It's like a concert of chemicals and the symphony of synapses allows for some awesome things to happen. Exercise boosts brain derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), for example, which acts to encourage neuronal protection, growth, and integration. If I'm ever able to figure out how to cure cancer or how to peacefully end war (both on my 'to do' list), I'm pretty sure that I'll accomplish it while on a treadmill – when I'm able to think sinfully clear.

While it is true that the majority of us are visual learners, I also think that a majority of us need to move in order to think most optimally.

Fourth, it facilitates better sleep. In my line of work, I spend the majority of the day living inside my head. My job demands lots of thinking and not much moving, and I doubt that I'm alone on this one. Historically, when the sun was up, we were moving. There were no plush desk chairs, no files to sort, no computers. When the sun went down, we would stop moving and the brain would know that it's time to sleep. These days, with no peripheral input from our bodies during the day, our sleep/wake cycles have become severely disrupted. The brain is left thinking, "I'll stay awake a bit longer. Maybe then he'll actually start moving."

On and on it goes. Cardio can enhance the immune system, boost your mood, encourage healthy digestion, and so forth. There's something to be said for the ol' "it gets the blood moving" mantra.

Okay, now on to Andrew's original question. There has been, and continues to be, ongoing debate about the potential benefits of fasted cardio as it applies to body composition. The idea behind fasted cardio is this: When you wake in the morning (or after any period of prolonged fasting for that matter), insulin is low and the body is relatively deficient in glycogen (the storage form of carbohydrates). Carbohydrates fuel the initial stages of aerobic activity and if they have been depleted (as they are during sleep), the body will turn to fat for a primary source of energy. Thus, performing cardio first thing in the morning would seem to cause the body to tap into fat stores more quickly, ultimately burning more body fat. The question becomes, does this actually occur? Maybe...probably...at least acutely.

Several studies have demonstrated that beta-oxidation – the process of breaking down fats – is increased when cardio is performed in a fasted state. In fact, one study published in the Journal of Applied Physiology demonstrated that 24-hour fat oxidation was higher in a group that performed fasted morning cardio sessions compared to those that did the cardio after eating breakfast (Iwayama, 2014). End of story, right? Well, not exactly. While studies like this provide us with valuable insight, we cannot be sure that the findings translate directly into real, meaningful outcomes. In other words, we should not assume that the increase in beta-oxidation observed with fasted cardio would necessarily equate to greater long-term reduction of body fat and improved body composition. In fact, the studies on this have been rather paradoxical.

In 2014, Brad Shoenfeld and colleagues conducted a study of 20 healthy women (average age = 22) on hypocaloric diets, to test the hypothesis that performing aerobic exercise after an overnight fast accelerates the loss of body fat. In the study design, 10 women performed an hour of cardio after an overnight fast while the other 10 completed cardio after first eating a meal. The exercise was done 3 days per week for a total of 4 weeks. The results? Both groups lost weight and fat but neither demonstrated more significant losses.

What the? Let's consider further... As the authors of this analysis rightly suggest, this study is likely to be most meaningful to you if you're a young, active female on a hypocaloric diet since this profile fits those of their study subjects. If this does not, however, sound like you, the results may or may not be applicable.

In the process of figuring out what might work best for you, it is necessary to consider all of the variables associated with your unique situation.

Have you been exceptionally stressed lately? Stress can elevate cortisol, which in excess, can presumably tip the balance and result in a greater breakdown of muscle tissue when doing cardio in a fasted state. (\*Side note: I almost hate to mention this because so many people, especially guys, are terrified of doing cardio for fear of losing muscle and the very thought is enough to raise their cortisol levels. If the cardio is done strategically, this just won't happen. You won't get on a treadmill at 210 lbs. and step off with 10 lbs. less muscle. Relax...)



How do you feel while doing the cardio? I personally feel better when I do cardio after eating a meal. If I choose to skip fasted cardio because it doesn't make me feel great, it goes without saying that I can't burn fat from cardio that I didn't perform. I remind myself of this concept routinely in medical practice – I can develop the best treatment plan in the world but if my patients aren't going to follow it, it's all for not. Compliance is key.

How many calories are you eating? I sweat more during cardio when I've eaten a meal. This provides evidence of a very important consideration – the thermogenic effect of food. Some of the food that is eaten prior to exercise is used to produce heat. This can provide a sort of metabolic "boost" resulting in a greater calorie burn. Some studies have in fact indicated that this might, given the right conditions, be very relevant to maintaining a lean physique and a healthy metabolism. We must,

however, be careful. If I were to eat 500 calories before doing cardio and only burn 200 calories during the session while being in caloric excess for the remainder of the day, we can reason what the net effect might be on my efforts to lose fat despite getting a small metabolic boost during the activity.

- Do you use caffeine?
- Do you follow a high carbohydrate diet? How about a high fat diet?
- Do you weight train later in the day?
- How much lean body mass do you have?
- How long before or after the cardio do you eat?
- At what intensity do you do the cardio?

I'm complicating the picture on purpose and doing so for the following reasons:

One - When someone claims to have the definitive answer on this sort of thing, know that there is no definitive answer. While "it depends" represents a pretty unfulfilling response, it's the truth.

Two – In accordance with the above and as in most things related to health and fitness, it's not a one-size-fits-all proposition. You must understand that each person represents a unique case. I would recommend this - try each method for a few weeks and monitor your progress. Use Parrillo's 9-point body stat system in order to determine your exact body composition so that you know what affect each approach is having and which will provide the greatest benefits for you.



Follow Dr. Girmann on Instagram  
@Dr.JeremyGirmann



By Scott Canatsey – Lead trainer at the Parrillo Performance training facility

At Parrillo Performance, we have a lot of people come through the door looking to begin a vigorous weight training program that will yield serious muscular gains. There is always a great excitement and typically a misperception of what all is entailed in creating a stage worthy physique. A physique that looks like it is a possible show winner. But, there is often a misconception of the amount of time and commitment needed to possess a truly competitive physique. It seems most people are engaged in this activity, on some level, when you take a few minutes and scroll through Instagram. People showing videos of exercises they perform and

pictures of the food necessary for the endeavor. And at first blush, it looks like even becoming a professional in the sport is fairly attainable by any healthy person. But, social media is a “highlight reel”. The less glamorous aspects of the sport like training on Friday night when most are out and about, eating food that you must quite often carry around, and keeping a disciplined time schedule so the meals are timed correctly and the body can get into a rhythm to perform like a well-oiled machine. This is the grind. This becomes the biggest part of the endeavor, when it is fully realized.

So, where is the best place to begin? Is following the training regimens of the champions we try to emulate the fastest and most effective route? Should we just use our intuition and follow some training videos? Should we hire an online trainer? Or, is it worthwhile to hire a trainer locally? These are all great questions that have one common answer. That answer is to start with the basics. Using fundamental, compound movements to build size and strength is the best foundation for anyone interested in strength sport of some type or a bodybuilding endeavor. This work builds overall strength in bone, connective tissue and muscle. Over the first year or so, biological and physiological systems are being built, as the body is trained to work, eat and rest for this physical endeavor. A new machine, a better operating machine is built as we train, stretch, eat, rest and recover in a rhythm, week to week.

This begs the question, “What is the best training routine and eating schedule to use to get the wanted results of strength and lean muscular growth?” In this article we are going to zero in on a training regimen that is tried, tested and true. There are exceptions to every rule, but this routine will work for all who work it properly. I have used this myself and on many of the young athletes, and some older ones, who have just discovered the world of muscle. It is regimented and methodical. It is what I consider very basic work. But, it is extremely effective for seasoned athlete and neophyte alike for building strength and muscular size.

This is a 3 day per week training regimen that works the Pulling muscle day one, the Legs on day two, and pulling muscles on day three. Commonly called a “push-pull” routine, this is typically performed on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We use compound movements for power and size and add some basic

movements for the smaller body parts like biceps and triceps. Be sure to take a rest day between these days and eat to grow. (Some great diet examples are available for free on the Parrillo.com website.)

**DAY 1: Chest and Triceps** (three exercises for chest and two for triceps)

**Chest**

- **Bench Press:** 4 Sets. First set warm-up for 15 reps. (Move slowly enough to feel the muscle get some blood in it.) Start with weight that is manageable for 12 reps. The last 2 reps should be tough! Then for the next 2 sets, go up in weight. Add 20% to the weight each set.
- **Incline Bench Press:** 3 Sets of 12 reps-10 reps and 8 reps. No less than 6 reps on the last set
- **Flye:** 3 Sets. 12 reps, 10 reps, 10 reps.
- two sets of *abdominal crunches*

**Triceps**

- **Tricep Push Down:** 3 sets 12-15 Reps. Each set should be hard to get the last 2-3 reps.
- **Lying Tricep Extension:** 3 sets. perform 15 reps, 12 reps and 8-10 Reps. Failure on last set.

**DAY 2: Legs**

- **Leg Extension:** 3 Sets. 15-20 Reps.
- **Leg Curl:** 3 Sets 15-20 Reps
- **Squat:** 3 Sets. Progressively heavier. 10-15 reps.
- **Leg Press:** 4 Sets. Set 1 is to pump a bunch of blood in. 30-40 reps. Non-stop. Moderately heavy. Fail at 30-40 reps. Stretch! Sets 2-4 will be progressively heavier but a little slower. 15-20 reps. If you have a training partner, take the last set 10 reps beyond failure.

**DAY 3: Back and Biceps**

**Back**

- **Pull-ups:** 3 Sets. Assisted if necessary. Each set to failure.
- **Bent Over Row:** 3 Sets progressively

- heavier. 8-12 rep range.
- **Lat Pull Down:** 3 Sets Progressively heavier. 12-15 Reps.
- **Close Grip Pull-Down:** 3 Sets Progressively heavier. 12-15 Reps

**Biceps**

- **Easy Bar Curl:** 3 Sets. 10-15 Reps. Progressively heavier.
- **Alternating Dumbbell Curl:** 3 Sets. 10-15 Reps. Progressively heavier.
- **Hammer Curl:** 3 Sets. 10-15 Reps. Progressively heavier.

This is a program that can be used by

beginners or seasoned lifters. Just add to the volume as strength and stamina increase. And remember to stretch the target muscle between the sets. Flexibility is one of the keys to exceptional muscle growth.

Nutrition for this kind of training is as important as the training itself. It's 100% effort in training and 100% effort in nutrition that makes the best formula for success. Don't be afraid to eat! We will discuss that next month.

Until next month!





By Andre Newcomb

### Do you train *hard* enough?

*Knowing what to do is only half the battle*

It was chest and biceps day, and this was the end of the training session. The two sweat-drenched bodybuilders were down to the final exercises of a session that had already lasted 48-minutes. And they weren't done yet by a long shot. As was their habit, when they were ¾ of the way thru the session, the men would take a 3-minute break to activate and drink their 50/50 Plus™ replenishment shake. These were experienced trainers that had long ago discovered that by taking a minute and drinking their shake *before* the end of the session, the energy nosedive that was natural at the end of a tough workout was avoided. Typically, the last exercise(s) of any training session suffer from sheer exhaustion. The larger of the two men filled his Tupperware container (prefilled with 50/50 Plus™ powder) with cold water from the drinking fountain. He shook the plastic jug to activate the powder. He unscrewed the top and sat down on a bench. He popped four Muscle Amino™ capsules into his mouth and washed them down with the cold 50/50 Plus™ shake. He never got over how delicious a cold 50/50 Plus™ shake tasted during a brutal workout.

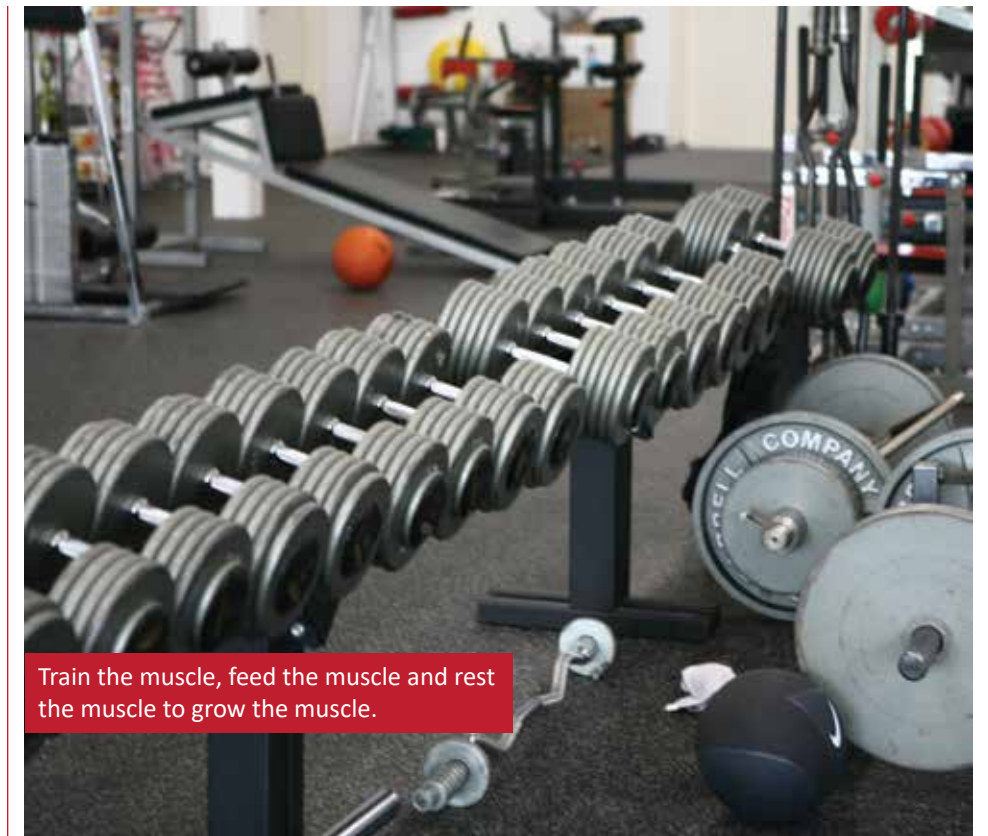
He downed the 50/50 Plus™ shake and felt a surge of energy: he had ingested 21 grams of high-BV protein, a fistful of muscle-healing branched-chain amino acids and 17 grams of glycogen-restoring slow-release carbohydrate. "Ready?" John addressed Mick, his short, muscular training partner. Mick finished his 50/50 shake and wiped the sweat off his forehead with his sweatshirt sleeve. "Let's get after it." They were

finishing today's chest session with a bicep strategy they had learned from The Master Blaster, John Parrillo. John had shown them this protocol when they had journeyed to Parrillo Performance headquarters a few years back to become Parrillo Certified Personal Trainers. It was a "same body-part" Giant Set concept. Mick and John were successful competitive bodybuilders from the San Diego area. They found that the Giant Set



approach worked particularly well on arms and most particularly as a "finisher," i.e. as the last exercise done when working a body part. The two men went one at a time. Each man would go all the way through a five-set sequence while the other spotted, exhorted, and most importantly, applied perfect forced reps: there would be a lot of forced reps today.

The idea was to select poundage you were capable of handling for 15 strict reps before hitting positive failure. The training partner would then step in and administer five successively more difficult forced reps. This protocol, which the duo called "15 + 5" was used on each of the five consecutive exercises. Upon completing the 5-set sequence, each man had done 100-cumulative reps for one muscle. In this case, biceps. Mick was a powerhouse with a 405-pound raw bench press at 185-pounds. He started things off with standing barbell curls. Mick made 15 strict and then semi-strict reps before Big John stepped in to administer five final forced reps. Mick set the barbell down and immediately walked to the dumbbell rack, he picked up a pair of 40s and sat down on an exercise bench. He made 15 reps on his own in the seated dumbbell curl before John bent down to help with the final five forced reps. Mick dropped the bells on the floor, stood and walked to preacher bench. He began curling a pre-set E-Z curl bar. His biceps looked ready to explode as John helped him finished the 20th rep. Mick let loose with a profanity. He shook his pumped arms as walked to the nearby seated machine curl device. Mick broke down on rep 11. John stepped in to assist with forced reps. Mick slumped on the curl seat, visibly exhausted, his arms were swollen, red and shaking. "ONE MORE EXERCISE!" Bellowed Big John. This jolted Mick out of his haze. He walked to the cable crossover device and began the final bicep exercise: standing cable curls using a short-handle curl device. He performed 15



+ 5 reps in the continuous tension style. He dropped the handle and immediately dropped to one knee; his chest was heaving. John thought Mick was going to throw up or pass out.

With much effort Mick got off his knee and staggered to a bench. He sat down and bent forward, hands on knees. "You alright?" Big John asked, genuinely concerned. Mick did not look up. He flashed a thumbs up sign. Five bicep exercises, 20 reps per set, no rest between each of the five exercise. 100-total reps. Mick got himself together and spotted Big John; happily putting him through the agony he'd experienced. The workout exemplified the type of effort that must precede muscle growth. Mick and John finished with massive arm pumps. John was so zapped that when he got to the 5th exercise, pushdowns, he only got seven reps. John said, "My arms are so pumped up I don't know if I can drive my car: turning the steering wheel is going to be difficult." Mick shook his head, "That was incredible! If there is a better way to get a massive arm pump, I haven't run across it." Parrillo Giant

set strategy is just one Parrillo method designed to take a targeted muscle past capacity, way past capacity. John Parrillo is a master at creating tactics and strategies that take a muscle so far past "positive failure" that there is zero question that hypertrophy has been triggered. There is never any question that the Parrillo-style weight workout will trigger muscle growth. Any bodybuilder that trains hard enough to trigger hypertrophy must "underpin" the high-intensity resistance training with high-calorie/clean calorie Parrillo-style nutrition. Poor nutrition can undo our training efforts. High intensity training *must* be underpinned with high protein, high calorie, clean calorie eating. The third and final piece of the growth equation is rest: the body rebuilds itself during periods of deep, rapid-eye-movement sleep. Train the muscle, feed the muscle and rest the muscle to grow the muscle.

Regular people, non-bodybuilders, the type of earnest civilian that populates the well-equipped local YMCA or Health Club, love to sit or lie on the progressive resistance machines and





perform a few submaximal sets, going through the motions, never coming close to pushing or pulling nearly hard enough to cause the body to grow muscle. If you have never experienced going to failure and beyond, then it is impossible to understand how truly hard humans must work in order to *force* the body to grow muscle. Regular folks will show up and dutifully put in their time, pushing or pulling on the machines, riding the cardio machines (never sweating to any degree) and “dieting” using the latest fad diet. The diet is invariably some low-calorie diet stressing all the wrong foods. These fitness efforts fail miserably. There are three parts to any effective bodybuilding approach, resistance training, nutrition and cardio. Bodybuilding resistance training is executed with *ferocity*. Hardcore bodybuilding lifting is all about going up to and then past the limits on a regular and continuing basis. The Parrillo approach makes constant use of “intensity enhancers,” methods that allow the bodybuilder to venture past positive failure, where

the gains lie. If a bodybuilder goes to positive failure, and then figures out a way to keep the set going, a far deeper muscular inroad is dug, triggering maximum hypertrophy.

**Forced reps:** The Mac Daddy of intensity enhancers, assuming they are done right: not too many and not too often. Sloppy forced reps risk injury. Forced reps depend on the skill of the training partner. Few bodybuilders understand how to apply a proper forced rep. Once the bodybuilder has hit positive failure, the training partner steps in and provides enough help to ensure the forced rep *never stops*. However, much help is needed to keep the bar or bells or machine or cable handles moving - without ever stopping.

**Drop sets:** a drop set is the classic way in which to keep a set going after positive failure has been achieved in any exercise. Once the bodybuilder cannot perform another rep with say, 100-pounds, immediately drop 20% and “rep out” 80-pounds,

getting another 3-5 reps. Now cut the poundage another 20% and rep out once again with 60-pounds. Drop sets are usually limited to 3-4. The key to effective drop sets is to not waste time between sets. Make it quick, the trick is to make the targeted muscle think it is one continuous effort.

**Intensity sets:** this is a Parrillo innovation that is often used as a warm-up but most often used as a ‘finisher.’ The strategy uses a “grind” rep speed that creates continuous muscle tension. The Parrillo bodybuilder is instructed to keep a perfectly even pace on both the eccentric and concentric phase of a lift. Be it a bench press or leg press, by raising and lowering, pushing or pulling, at the same slowed speed creates incredible muscle tension. The bodybuilder’s pain threshold is improved and expanded by using intensity sets on a regular basis.

**Tri-sets or Giant Sets:** as described at the beginning of the article, the Parrillo approach will string together 3-5 exercises for the same body part and then hit these exercises in quick succession. Reps can vary although John usually recommends sets of 12-20 reps per set. In our recounting of John and Mick’s workout, a single Giant Set was used as a body part finisher. John will often perform 3-5 Giants in a row, making the Giant sets the entire workout. Repeating the same Giant set multiple times creates an unbelievable muscle pump, particularly if the bodybuilder’s glycogen stores are full coming into the Giant set workout. Refuel ¾ of the way through the workout with 50-50 Plus™.

It is one thing to know *what* you are supposed to do. Solid training and nutritional information are hard to come by; however, as a reader of the Parrillo Performance Press you have access to how real bodybuilders obtain real gains. Knowing what to do is only half the battle. Knowledge

need be augmented with *ferocity*. In the Parrillo approach, the ability to train hard is critical. Equally important is the bodybuilder’s ability to withstand the intense discomfort that accompanies forced reps, drop sets, etc. This ability improves over time and with practice. Most regular people don’t understand how hard and how uncomfortable serious training needs to be. Regular people that try forced reps and exert with the intensity and ferocity required can’t take it. They want no parts of training as hard as is required to trigger muscle growth. Supplementation is critical; potent Parrillo supplements augment potent food meals; the classical “Parrillo meal” consists of a portion of lean protein, a portion of fiber carbs and a portion of natural starch carb. A Parrillo trainee will start their day with a Parrillo Optimized Whey™ shake. They will wash down their morning “Parrillo Pills” before the cardio session. The last thing at night before bed the Parrillo bodybuilder will wash down more Parrillo Pills (Parrillo Liver Amino™, Enhanced GH™) only this time with Parrillo Hi-Protein powder™, a slow release protein.



During the day, Parrillo Protein bars™, Parrillo Energy bars™, High Protein High Fiber Soft Chew bars™, Parrillo Protein Chew bars™ and used in conjunction with liberal amounts of CapTri® C8 MCT, the Parrillo MCT supplement that provides a source

of clean calories, much needed for recovery. It all is built on hard training: without hard training there is no need for expert nutrition or precision supplementation. Truthfully answer this critical question: are you training hard enough?

## What's your story?

### Are you a...

- Bodybuilder?
- Fitness Model?
- Gym Owner?
- Personal Trainer?
- Contest Competitor?
- An Avid Parrillo Product User?

### Or maybe you...

- Have an amazing transformation story.
- Would like to inspire others.
- Want to show everyone what you've accomplished.

### Then we want to hear from you!

### All you need is to:

- E-mail us a short paragraph about yourself and why you should be featured.
- Provide 5 - 8 *high resolution* photos
- Answer some interview questions
- Have a photo release signed by any professional photographers whose photos you will be using.

**Contact:**  
[Graphics@parrillo.com](mailto:Graphics@parrillo.com)  
**to get started!**



**Recipe Spotlight**

**Brown Rice & Lentils**

- 5 cup water
- 100 g. brown rice
- 100 g. lentils
- 25 g. chopped mushrooms
- 5 cloves garlic
- 2 tsp. CapTri® C8 MCT

Bring water to hard boil and add rice. Reduce heat to a low boil. After 35 minutes, add lentils, mushrooms and garlic. Turn heat down to simmer and let cook another 25 to 35 minutes or until all water is gone and lentils are soft. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.

Add CapTri® to rice and lentils just before eating.

**Try adding some of your favorite vegetables to Brown Rice and Lentils!**



**Food of the Month**

**Jicama**

- As a veggie high in fiber, jicama also has a low glycemic index, is a great starchy vegetable choice for anyone struggling to balance blood sugar or who has diabetes, and can be helpful with losing weight fast, too.
- Look for whole jicama bulbs at large supermarkets and Latin or Asian grocery stores. You want to buy jicama when it feels firm, looks yellow to beige in color, and doesn't have any noticeable bruises.
- Jicama is super versatile both in terms of preparation needed and what types of flavors it pairs well with. Keeping some pre-chopped, roasted or sliced jicama sticks on hand is even a smart way to replace some of the processed grains in your diet.

**Nutritional Information for:  
Jicama, raw, 1 cup, (130.00g).**

Calories: 49	Fiber: 6.40g	Iron: 0.78mg
Protein: 0.94g	Sodium: 5.0mg	Phosphorous: 23mg
Fat: 0.12g	Potassium: 195mg	Vitamin A: 27 IU
Total Carbs: 11.47g	Calcium: 16mg	Vitamin C: 26.3mg

**Question & Answer**

**Question:** My bench press hasn't gotten better in about a year, so what can I do?

**Answer:** You should incorporate negatives in your bench press routine. Negatives, in which the eccentric or lowering portion of the exercise is performed, enhance neuromuscular efficiency - the ability to recruit a greater number of muscle fibers during muscular contraction. By doing negatives, you totally exhaust low threshold nerve paths, allowing you to systematically work the higher threshold nerve paths. This ultimately trains the whole muscle to fire at once. Negatives build a quick-firing muscle and you become stronger as a result. Heavy negatives performed with a spotter, as well as fascial stretching between sets, will increase your golgi tendon reflex threshold. The higher your golgi tendon threshold, the more intensely you can train. This leads to greater gains in strength and size.



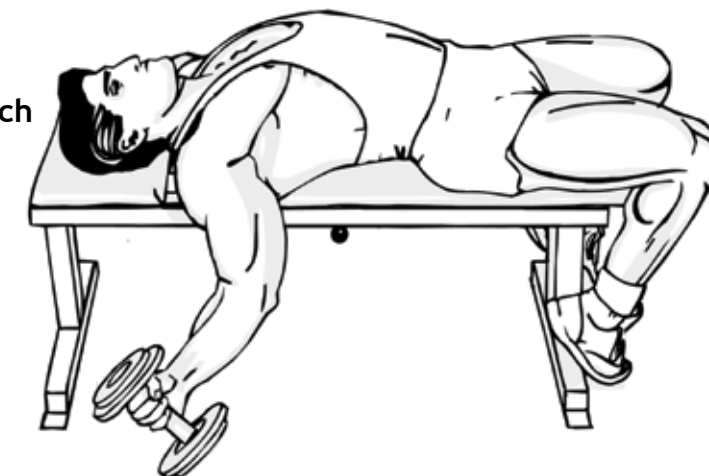
**Exercise Spotlight**

**Dumbbell Flies**

With dumbbell flies, it is important to keep your shoulders pressed into the bench throughout the entire movement. To get full isolation of the pecs, bring your elbows together at the top of the movement. Then push your sternum out at the top. The same technique should be used when performing cable crossovers.

**Performance Points**

- Keep your shoulders pressed back into the bench
- Bring your elbows together at the top
- Push your sternum out at the top, also.



**ORDER TODAY!**



\$49.95

The Parrillo Training Manual is designed to help you:

- Learn specific exercises that have proven effective for some of the nation's top competitive athletes.
- Determine the optimum rep/set scheme you need to maximize muscular density, cardiovascular density and muscular endurance.
- Increase your mental acuity, perfect your form and intensify your workouts.

**Information included:**

- Individual chapters for each muscle group, featuring sample workouts used by John Parrillo with some of the top professional and amateur bodybuilders in the world.
- Illustrated movements to show you the proper form for that particular exercise.
- The importance of aerobic training and how it can help improve your physique.
- Chapters on fascial stretching, a revolutionary way to stretch your muscles for maximum growth.
- A chapter on proper posing. Including all of the mandatory poses for most bodybuilding organizations.

**Supplement of the Month**

**High Fiber Chocolate Syrup Mix™**

Yes, you can have Chocolate Syrup even if you're on a strict diet! With Parrillo's High Fiber Chocolate Syrup Mix, you won't blow your diet because one serving is only 20 Calories, has no fat or sugar, plus you'll be getting 12g of prebiotic fiber. Our Chocolate Syrup is so easy to make: For 4 servings, just add 1 tablespoon of water to 2 level scoops of Chocolate Syrup Mix and stir until smooth. For an extra special treat, how about this: a Contest Brownie or slice of Hi-Protein Cake, topped with a scoop of Parrillo Protein Ice Kreem and drizzled with Chocolate Syrup! Now that's the way to diet.

- Great on Parrillo Protein Ice Kreem™, Hi-Protein Cake, Contest Brownies and more!
- Quick and easy to make, just add water and stir.
- Each serving contains 12g of prebiotic fiber, only 20 calories and 0g of sugar.





By John Parrillo

If you want more oomph in your workouts, then make sure you're powering up properly with pre-workout supplements – a regimen that will help boost your strength, increase your focus, and give you a turbo-surge of energy. Here's a protocol I recommend:

### CREATINE

One of the most amazing and effective bodybuilding supplements ever has to be creatine monohydrate™. Creatine is actually an energy supplement first and foremost, providing high energy phosphate groups to replenish the ATP which is consumed during muscular contractions. Creatine is nontoxic even in large amounts, is well-absorbed orally, and is readily taken up by muscles. There it is converted into creatine phosphate, which then serves as a donor of phosphate groups to ADP to re-generate ATP. ATP, as you know, is the immediate energy source used by muscles. So if we increase creatine levels inside muscles this will increase energy production, which translates into longer and harder workouts. Athletes using creatine report a significant increase in strength. It is not unusual for an experienced lifter to improve his or her maximum lift by 5-15% or to notice an increase of 2 or 3 more reps with a 10 rep-maximum load after creatine supplementation. This places a more severe stress on the muscle which ultimately

stimulates greater hypertrophy. This has been confirmed by numerous research studies.

The standard protocol for using creatine is to "load" the muscles for 5-7 days with 20 grams per day, taken as four servings of 5 grams each. This saturates the muscles with as much creatine as they can hold. This is followed by the "maintenance" phase, which usually consists of 5 grams per day, although some of our larger bodybuilders use 10 grams per day.



### WHEY AND GLUTAMINE

I have found the combination of Optimized Whey Protein™ and creatine to be a very powerful supplement tool. This is probably a more effective supplement combination than anything that was available even just a few years ago. To understand why, it is important to know a few things about whey protein and amino acid metabolism. It turns out that the amino acid profile of whey protein is very well suited to the needs of growing muscles. For one thing, whey is loaded with glutamine, an amino acid that occupies a central position in amino acid metabolism, since it is able to donate an amino group to a variety of keto-acids to form other amino acids.

Glutamine also plays a pivotal role in energy metabolism, believe it or not. Glutamine serves as the preferred fuel source for several cell types including immune cells and cells lining the intestines. During injury, burns, illness or other severe stresses (such as surgery), sometimes the body has to rob muscle tissue of its glutamine to serve as fuel for the intestine and the immune system. This depletes the body's glutamine reserve which can ultimately compromise immune function. This is one of the reasons why these conditions are highly catabolic and are associated with rapid loss of lean body mass. The fascinating thing is that this parallels in many respects what we see in the

over-training syndrome.

If this isn't enough to stimulate your interest in glutamine, it has also been proven that glutamine administered orally can increase growth hormone release. Most interesting was that the effective dose was only two grams. The real bottom line is that glutamine increases skeletal muscle protein synthesis, making it the single most important amino acid in supporting muscular growth. It not only helps block catabolism of muscle tissue during stress but also provides an important anabolic stimulus for muscle growth.

To use this information, I suggest that you take an Optimized Whey™ shake with your creatine dose one hour prior to your workout.

### BCAAs

The scientific understanding of muscle metabolism and exercise performance is probably the richest when it comes to the BCAAs - the branched chain amino acids. These are the essential amino acids leucine, isoleucine, and valine. While glutamine is the most abundant amino acid in the bloodstream and free inside muscle cells, the BCAAs are the most abundant amino acids incorporated into muscle proteins.

The branched chain amino acids have been a favorite supplement of hard core bodybuilders for years. And finally science is ready to agree. For decades, and still even today, many people think of muscle as a structural - functional type of tissue with really no role in energy production. Well, I have news for you. During times of stress, including severe exercise, muscle tissue can be broken down to serve as a fuel substrate, just like any other tissue of the body. Hopefully you will burn mostly fat as fuel, but you must also rely on glycogen, the storage form of carbohydrate. Eventually your body will also turn to protein, particularly the BCAAs, as a

### Parrillo Pre-Workout Power

fuel source (the good, the bad, and the ugly). The muscle proteins are a rich source of branched chain amino acids. The problem is that muscles can actually use the BCAAs directly as fuel, so in a pinch they will cannibalize themselves and oxidize their own proteins as a fuel source.

Take 2 Muscle Amino Formula™ capsules with every meal, and take 3-5 or more capsules particularly before a muscle blasting, iron pumping workout or a high intensity aerobic session.

### MAX ENDURANCE FORMULA™

Certain supplemental nutrients, in combination, can boost your endurance, mood, and mental acuity. This means you'll be more alert and focused during your workouts. The combo I'm talking about is:

- Inosine, which improves oxygen utilization
- DL-Phenylalanine, which improves

- mental acuity and pain tolerance
- Ferulic Acid, which stimulates endocrine function
- Potassium and Magnesium Aspartate, which helps clear ammonia, an endurance robbing waste product of intense training is quickly turned to uric acid and filtered out of the blood supply.

Take 5-10 capsules before training.

### FINAL WORD

Of course, beyond supplementation is nutrition, which for athletes and active people can be the difference between success and failure, health or injury. To have energy for your workouts, you need to consume energy in the form of a balanced diet – which is the basic tenet of the Parrillo Nutrition program. Taking in adequate calories, and increasing them from the right foods, will keep your strength and energy levels up. So eat well, train hard and supplement smart!



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**IRON VIC**  
**SPEAKS**  
 BY IRON VIC STEELE

- Lack of energy
- Back attack
- Chocolate switch out
- Leg extension yay or nay
- Fishing boat refuel
- Symmetrical impasse?

**W** Howdy,  
 I am a pretty good female bodybuilder up here in Montana. I am 50 and have been competing off and on for 20 years (more off than on, recently.) I am naturally lean and wiry. Being overweight has never been an issue. For me, the battle has always been adding muscle. Anyway, the training is good, my bodyweight is good – but over the past year my energy has nosedived. I live a physical life here on the ranch. My workouts are suffering. Any ideas??

Jean, Zebulon

The first thing I think of for a super active lady your age is iron deficiency anemia. My wife is a hell of an athlete, lean and lithe. When she turned 50, she too experienced energy drop offs for no real reason. She maintained a heavy workload as a horse trainer. She worked hard every day like you. She hadn't changed her diet one iota – she is very strict, she naturally likes good bodybuilding foods and out-of-bounds eating makes her sick. For no real reason, other than age, she experienced a serious loss of energy. She looked pale all the time. It got concerning when her low energy condition hung on for six months. Though my wife had tried about



every Parrillo product, she had never seriously tried Parrillo Liver Amino Formula™ because “the pills were too big.” I got her to get over this and she began taking three tablets every 2-3 waking hours. Over the course of her day she would take between 20-30 tablets. Each beef liver tab is loaded with heme iron, an antidote to iron deficiency. She was very consistent and within two weeks her energy spiked dramatically. Her paleness disappeared. She cut back to a liver amino “maintenance dose” of 15 tabs spread out over the day. Each of these powerhouse tabs contains 1.5 grams of high BV protein. I would advise you give this Liver Amino Formula™ a try; it worked well for my cowgirl and might work well for you.

Hello,

*If you were to design a back routine for a young bodybuilder competing in novice competition, what exercises, sets and reps would you suggest? I am a 5-8, 165-pound 27-year old*

*bodybuilder with a weak back. I have a lot of motivation to bring it up. From the front, I am as good as anyone I compete against. From the side, I am as good as anyone I compete against. When we turn around, my lack of a back sinks my placing. From the front and side, I am a winner, viewed from behind, I am a loser. I want to bring my back up and am willing to put in the work – what would you advise? I could train back twice a week for an hour.*

Jimmy Z., Newport Beach

There once was a very good pro bodybuilder named Paul Dillet. From the front view and side view, Paul was Mr. Olympia. When viewed from the rear, he was Mr. Nobody. Paul had it all, incredible arms, deltoids so good that Mr. Olympia Larry Scott once said, ‘Paul has the best deltoids I have ever seen on a human.’ Paul had legs: excellent thighs and 20-inch calves, great muscle clarity and delineation, freaky vascularity,

incredibly wide shoulders, narrow hips, towering height (6-3) and size (he competed weighing 270.) That was the good news – the bad news was that Dillet’s back was so subpar that people used to gasp when he turned around. I remember sitting in the front row of the press section at the Night of Champions at prejudging. Big Paul came out massive and ripped and blew us away with his double front bicep, his most muscular and single thigh pose. Then he turned around to do a lat spread and the two people seated on my left gasped, as if they’d seen someone with a horrible deformity. Paul looked hollow between his shoulder blades and he had no erectors. It looked like two different people. I applaud you for attacking your weak points instead of continually playing to your strengths. The good news is weak points come up quick; the bad news is weak points are not fun to train, that’s why you never train them. I will assume you know the proper techniques for the exercises I list.

**Day 1**

Deadlift, Romanian deadlift, Seated cable row, pulldowns

**Day 2**

Yates 70-degree row, Dumbbell shrug (seated,) Machine row, hyper-extensions

I would place these back workouts at opposite ends of the training week. Train legs on a day midway between the two back workouts. I would concentrate on five rep sets in the deadlift and Romanian (or stiff-leg) deadlift. 6-rep sets work well on the Dorian Yates-style 70-degee row. Seated dumbbell shrugs, pulldowns, machine rows and prone hyper-extensions are done for 8-10 rep sets. Drink a serving or two of 50-50 Plus™ after each of these back-specialization sessions. Over a ten-week period, drive up the poundage. Your lack of a back will be a thing of the past. You can avoid Dillet syndrome.

Vic,

*I wanted to thank you for your advice a few years ago. My wife had a serious addiction to chocolate. I don’t know if you remember, but you suggested I “switch out” the sugar-laden real chocolate with healthy, potent Parrillo chocolate-flavored products. That strategy worked like a charm. The whole strategy depended on the Parrillo products having real chocolate taste – enough chocolate ‘realism’ to satisfy a choc-a-holic. Right about the time I wrote you, Parrillo introduced Chocolate Fix protein powder™. She fell in love with Chocolate Fix™ shakes. She also loves the chocolate cherry cordial and chocolate almond coconut Parrillo Energy bars™. Then she got into the Parrillo chocolate pudding mix™ and the Parrillo chocolate cake mix™. She is 25-pounds lighter and off chocolate. Thanks for the invaluable advice.*

Roy, Virginia Beach

I myself love chocolate a little too much. I found that as I got older, I developed a taste for sweets that I never had as younger man. To make a long story short, I too used the ‘switch out’ tactic. I would start my day with a double Parrillo Hi-Protein™ shake. I would then eat a fudge brownie Protein bar mid-morning. Mid-afternoon I would drink a chocolate Optimized Whey™ protein shake and consume a Parrillo Soft Chew™ bar (chocolate.) After training I would have a double serving of chocolate Parrillo 50-50 Plus™. In the evening while watching TV I would binge with my favorite treat: Parrillo Hi-protein chocolate cake/cupcake mix™ topped with Parrillo chocolate frosting mix™. Before bed I would drink a Parrillo Chocolate Fix™ protein powder shake. After six weeks of this approach I was OVER chocolate. What makes is work is how delicious and how chocolate-like all these Parrillo products are. If the taste was pale or chemical-tasting, it wouldn’t work. We have



had tremendous success using this approach. Whenever you have an urge for chocolate - grab a Parrillo chocolate-flavored product. Thanks for relating this very cool success story; this chocolate switch-out has been helping chocolate freaks liberate themselves.

Greetings!

*I wanted to ask about leg extensions – do you recommend them? I have never heard you talk about them in the 10-years I have been reading your column. I am an intermediate level guy and can set my thighs on fire using leg extensions. If you do them, what kind of sets and reps and frequency do you recommend?*

Donny, Fort Worth

The leg extension is a fine finishing exercise. I think of isolation exercises like the leg extension as dessert – you

need to eat your meat and potatoes first (squats, leg presses, hack squats) and if you have room left over, have some dessert. I would make the leg extension as a final thigh exercise. Sets and reps? Leg extensions favor high reps. I would shoot for 10-12 reps embracing the burn. 2-3 sets of high rep leg extensions done after squats and leg presses will leave you wobbly-legged in the best way. Be sure to fully extend on each rep. Most guys use way too much weight and get a rebound at the bottom of each rep. They do not fully lock out the extension at the top of each rep: be sure and use a “hard” lockout. You want to lock out each rep to the point of cramping. Lower slowly as this increases the degree of difficulty. John Parrillo uses the leg extension to create the ultimate thigh finisher. After hitting positive failure, John will administer 2-3 forced reps. Then, with the help of a second training partner, the two men will raise the



The good news is weak points come up quick; the bad news is weak points are not fun to train, that’s why you never train them.



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**AVAILABLE IN  
CHOCOLATE AND  
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**Iron Vic Speaks!**

leg extension weight so the lifter can perform negative reps. This is the ultimate in leg pump, particularly if you've already stuffed yourself on meat and potatoes.

*Greetings from Spain,*

*I am a commercial fisherman that goes out to sea for weeks at a time. I work hard and I am lean. No lifting. The food onboard for the crew is excellent: all kinds of quality seafood and good veg prepared by our fulltime cook. My question is, I belong to a commercial gym and I go and lift when I am home. My question is – which Parrillo bar would you recommend for me to eat while on deck working? I get wore down, particularly in the late afternoon after wrestling gigantic nets filled with fish.*

*Andreas, San Sabastian*

I would go with the Parrillo Energy bar™. This nutritional powerhouse delivers 220 calories with 34-grams of carb and 17-grams of protein. That is a lot of firepower. If you keep the Parrillo Energy Bar™ in a pocket next to your body as you work, when you open it to eat it, the bar will be soft, pliable – and delicious. My favorite Parrillo Energy bar™ is the chocolate almond coconut flavor. It seems impossible that a bar that tastes that sweet and chocolate-y and delicious only has 4-grams of sugar. Incredible. One or two bars midway through a shift will make a big difference: two bars are essentially a meal in a wrapper.

*Victor,*

*Can a man overcome real symmetrical imbalances? I know there are a lot of variables and every bodybuilder's situation is slightly different – still, I have rarely if ever seen a man overcome serious genetic structural flaws. I have seen bodybuilders create larger and more muscular versions of themselves – but I have never seen a*

*top-heavy guy or bottom-heavy guy, or narrow-shoulder wide-hip person overcome their imbalances. I can think of a whole lot of famous IFBB pros that had incredible body-parts – body-parts featured on the front covers of leading muscle mags – yet they could not win a minor IFBB event because of terrible structural imbalances.*

*Bart, Memphis*

You are right and you are wrong. The IFBB pro you are likely referring to is the late Mike Matarazzo. Mike appeared on more Muscle Mag covers than anyone in the late 1990s, or rather Mike's incredible arms or incredible legs appeared on the covers. Mike was cursed with wide hips and narrow shoulders. His imbalance was so great that it was uncorrectable. In perhaps the best case of remedial training, Larry Scott overcame a blocky physique by developing the best deltoids in the game at that time. Skinny legs can be bought up, bottom-heavy-ness can be addressed with upper body specialization. I would never tell a young bodybuilder or athlete, 'hey, don't bother trying to correct your structural imbalances; it is a waste of time.' John Parrillo first training tenant is: "stop continually playing to your strengths, bring up your weak points." So, you are right in that Matt Matarazzo could never correct his huge structural flaw. On the other hand, countless men have made former weak points strong points.



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Parrillo Protein Chew Bars™	Chews Like Taffy	12 / box	\$32.00
Vanilla and Chocolate Graham Cracker			
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May 2019 Featured Athlete