

12 Tips for Successful Weight Training

– by Cory Holly.

This year (2009) I celebrate 40 consecutive years of weight training. I began lifting at age 12 (1959) when many believed that weight training at that age stunted your growth, enlarged your heart and made you inflexible. We now know this isn't true. Pumping iron is like magic.

Weight training is my anchor. It's been faithful to the day and through thick and thin, has always been my loyal friend. During my experience training in countless gyms, rec centers and fitness facilities all over the world, I met many great teachers, coaches, athletes and bodybuilders. I learned much and applied what made sense.

Here are a dozen training principles for your consideration.

1. Train each body part once a week (Legs, Chest, Back, Shoulders, Arms). Train five days in sequence, then rest. Sometimes I train five days straight, or 3-on, rest a day then complete the program. You can also train 2-on, rest a day, then train 2 or 3 on, rest again and then do whatever is needed to complete the cycle. You can vary the schedule in many ways; the key is to make it work for you and pick up where you left off. Find ways to get to the gym instead of ways not to. An excuse is just a different way of saying you don't want to.



2. On days off, go for a walk or perform some low-intensity leisure activity. Discover the benefits of active rest. Go for a swim. Hike up a mountain. Play with your kids. Go bowling. Shoot some hoops. Take your bike out for a spin. Use the body you're building in real life application or it's no different than a picture on a wall. Enjoy your strength and beauty. Take out the garbage or vacuum the house. Paint the garage. Clean the car. Use it or it's useless.

3. Train progressively, train with intensity. Log your strength gains and keep track of your progress. Challenge yourself.

Don't waste time. Focus on the work at hand. Put your mind in your muscle. If you understand how this is done then you know the secret of steel. If you don't, watch Conan the Barbarian again, and again and again. If you still don't get the riddle of steel or understand its puzzle, you never will.

4. Less is more. As strength increases, as exercise performance and execution quality improves over time, it should take less volume of work to get the job done. My workouts with the iron average 3-4 minutes per workout. That's right. I'm talking time under load. Time under tension. Not loading or unloading plates. Not setting up the exercise or putting weights away. I'm talking actual lifting time when I squat, deadlift or bench. So make it count. Make the execution of the movement top notch. First class. Second to none. Other gym members should be congratulating you all the time because of how gracefully and skillfully you move the weights.

5. No sitting down between sets. Sip on a carbohydrate-electrolyte-buffered vitamin-C ascorbate solution constantly. Stay well hydrated. Prepare your next exercise in advance while resting between sets. Walk around the gym, your body will recover faster. Think about what you're doing. Think about what's to come in the next minute, not next Thursday! Get ready to explode. What's at hand isn't about your girlfriend, your daughter or your stocks and bonds.

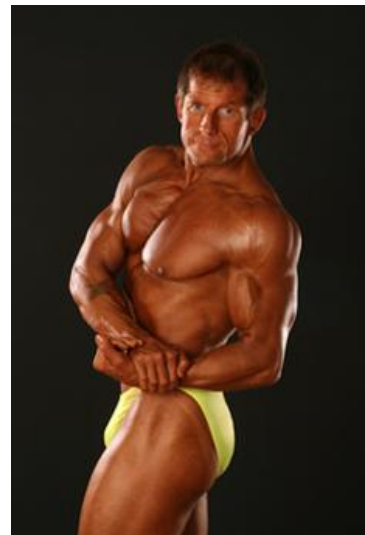
Sitting is for slackers. Sitting pools blood and encourages acidosis. Sitting turns you into a slug. Unless your name is written somewhere get off your ass and let somebody else use the machine.

6. Rest 1-3 minutes or longer between sets. It's not a race. In the gym haste absolutely makes waste. Train for strength and power if size and muscularity is your goal. Manage carbs and fat intake to modify bodyfat. Keep your daily protein intake up to 2-3 grams per kilogram of your lean mass. Think "fat" not weight. Think "muscle" not weight. Think in terms of body composition. Unless you're a competitive Olympic wrestler, get your mind off how much you weigh! Weight is the influence of gravity on your mass. You're either fit or fat. Measure it. Now get over it and start busting your ass!

7. Don't exercise to lose fat, exercise to get fit. Exercise to maintain optimum structure and function. Exercise to build muscle! Train with weights to build or maintain muscle, bone density and underlying ligament structure. Perform aerobic exercise to improve cardio. Stretch to maintain flexibility. Use fresh, organic whole food to fuel your body and manage bodyfat, not training. What you eat is a function of how you think. If you eat crap it's because you've got crap "in" your mind. Clean out your head like a computer with a bad virus. Download some new software. The old software is obsolete and obviously not working. Change your thoughts and you will change your life. The excess fat around your gut is there because you put it there. Because you want it there! It's caused by eating what you're a slave to.

8. Exercise intensity and success is determined by repeated failure (or what is known as an oxymoron). Each set is carried to absolute momentary failure except by reason of safety, such as when benching without a spotter, or if you are working to hit specific rep numbers, in which case you DO NOT go beyond the target rep number. Two steps forward, one step back. The objective is to initiate damage in the predetermined muscular region in a controlled and progressive manner, to disrupt the inner cellular environment forcing the body to adapt and compensate by increasing the strength, size and/or number of muscle fibers and satellite cells (remodeling & hyperplasia).

9. After you elevate your body temperature by warming-up correctly, perform several warm-up sets of the first principle exercise scheduled for that particular day. The bench press for example. Each warm-up set is an engram; a message sent to your brain that is stored and utilized as a reference guide regarding range of motion, line of movement, technique and execution. Also known as a postulated biochemical change that represents a memory. Repetition is the mother of skill, provided the reps are performed with quality & precision. Add weight to each successive warm-up set and reduce the number of reps as you approach the weight you are going to lift for your two (2) primary work sets. Condition your mind and body for the approaching stress to minimize risk of injury and to maximize your performance potential.



10. Ideally, train in the mornings when testosterone levels peak naturally. Work, family, fatigue or appointments seldom interrupt early morning workouts. Go to bed sooner and get up earlier. Start the day off in the right direction. Pump some blood through your veins and sweat. Stimulate your mind. Whet your appetite for excellence. Visualize success. Train early to create a post-workout thermogenic response for the next 12 hours. Jump start your metabolism,

increase your mental acuity and create a demand for food. You'll be energized all day long! After the real work is done the rest of the day is like a highway rest stop. You'll be gliding down the mountain while everyone else is still climbing!

11. Determine your progress and training results by:

- a) Recording your strength (facts on paper don't lie)
- b) Monthly or bi-monthly body composition assessment (everyday is best)
- c) Complete annual or bi-annual fitness analysis including bio-age
- d) Changes in your physical appearance (stand naked in front of a full length mirror with the lights on)
- e) Direct use of a measuring tape (gentlemen...for optimum symmetry your neck, upper arms and calves should all be the same)

12. Eat as hard as you train. Don't leave your diet to chance! Put as much effort into planning your meal strategy as you do your workout schedule. This is by far the hardest component and where the great majority of people fail, not because they're incapable, but because they don't understand the importance of nutrition as a science and a weapon to defend against oxidative stress and fatigue. To be successful in bodybuilding (bodyshaping) you have to overcome the monotony of training, eating and sleeping at the same time, in the same way, DAY AFTER DAY! The body loves routine, it's the mind that seeks variety and it's the mind (especially the emotional mind) that gets us into trouble. Like how we crave things. Let your mind wander off course and you're bound to wind up on the rocks. When it comes to nutrition don't float on the ocean of life aimlessly like a piece of driftwood. A good navigator uses math and science to calculate direction and outcome. The captain tells everybody what to do because he knows exactly where he's going and why.

As always, stay well and live free... CH



Me and Cory at the CHI Fitness Camp in Hawaii, April 2009.

The Cory Holly Institute (CHI) provides students and members everywhere with the most comprehensive and reliable sports nutrition education in the world. Visit CoryHolly.com.

