

THE

ROCK HARD



MUSCLE
HANDBOOK

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Rock-Hard Muscle Handbook

How would you like to finally melt fat, keep off excess weight and stay fit and gorgeous for years to come?

When people come up to me and ask, “How do I keep off all these extra pounds?” my usual response is, “If you really want it to happen, the answers will come to you!”

The fact of the matter is that there are many ways to lose weight and build lean muscle mass. There are thousands of successful fitness enthusiasts and expert bodybuilders around the country – each of these individuals have found their own path to achieving weight loss and fitness.

Why do some people succeed in losing weight more quickly than others?

Don’t get me wrong: each person may be capable of developing his own variations when it comes to dieting and exercise, but that doesn’t mean that he is reinventing the wheel.

If a person loses weight because he exercised or changed his diet, he unknowingly applied sound principles of weight loss.

The same truth applies to individuals who seem to have a knack in building lean muscle mass even if they’re just working out at home. These folks are applying essential principles of weight training and bodybuilding – they just don’t know it!

Of course, if you’re going to try building rock-hard muscles without knowing the principles behind the activity, you’ll have to go through a lot of trial and error first.

Some people just don’t have time for trial and error, and, in many cases, guessing what to do with your body can cause serious health issues down the road.

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What's the first step to successful weight loss and bodybuilding?

Before starting any weight loss or bodybuilding regimen, you should already be aware of the foundational principles behind these endeavors.

This book is your easy avenue to the most important principles that you will need to sustain a powerful and effective fat-cutting and muscle-building program.

There are countless fitness programs on the market today, each one promising guaranteed results in X number of weeks or sometimes, just days.

The problem with these programs is that they never really explain *why* something is working in the first place. People don't learn the underlying principles - they just learn the variations featured in specific programs or routines.

If you want to be a truly informed fitness enthusiast or bodybuilder, you would want to know *why* something is working. This specialized knowledge will also help you choose a good program based on the soundness of the fitness principles used in the program itself.

It is my sincere hope that this book will help you achieve the body of your dreams so that you can finally show off that fine, rock-hard musculature that you have always wanted!

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Assumptions:

This report assumes the following:

1. That you are interested in learning about the core principles of sound nutrition, fitness and building lean muscles mass.
2. That you will not be using the information contained in this report as a substitute for the advice from a healthcare professional or a certified fitness trainer.
3. That you will exercise all prudence and caution when applying fitness and nutrition principles for the first time, with full knowledge that this is your body that you are experimenting with.
4. That you have an open mind and are willing to learn more about how the body cuts fat and builds lean muscles through proper nutrition and exercise.

Medical Disclaimer:

Always consult with your physician before beginning any physical fitness program or diet program.

If you experience pain at any point during exercise, please stop and consult with your healthcare provider.

Chapter 2: Truths and Fallacies About Building Muscle

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How can you build bigger muscles while increasing your overall strength and fitness?

There has always been a great confusion when determining the right course of action when it comes to building well-defined muscles and keeping fat at bay.

There are literally thousands of Web articles, magazine specials and books on the topic. At any one time, there are dozens of local and international bodybuilding experts producing a stream of information for anyone's consumption.

If you try to read every expert's take on how to improve your bodybuilding efforts, you may still be reading after a few years. That's how much information there is out there! The good news is that I've taken the liberty of crystallizing the most important principles of building lean muscle and condensed them so you can learn the basics *fast*.

The Foundations of Bodybuilding

I. Challenge Your Body

How can you make your workouts interesting and challenging enough to trigger a higher performance response from your body?

The secret of continuous progress in bodybuilding is knowing how to challenge your body so that it doesn't get bored with your workouts. Our bodies are extremely adaptable organic engines. Once you've reached your peak performance for a specific set of movements at fixed intensities, that is the time when your body begins to achieve equilibrium.

Why does equilibrium matter?

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When your body attains equilibrium, it ceases to perform at its highest level and you may find it more difficult to cut fat and build mass in specific areas of your body.

You can change this trend by progressively increasing the total weight or resistance you are using whenever you work out.

When we lift weights at the gym, we are essentially introducing resistance to the equation. Our muscles fight against this resistance and when they do, muscle fibers contract and expand as they struggle to pull, push and lift the various resistances we use in our exercises.

How can you progressively increase the intensity of your workouts?

One of the best indicators of your strength is the number of repetitions you can manage when you lift a specific weight.

For example, if you are currently lifting 40 kilograms on the bench press and you can press 40 kilograms 20-30 times easily, this probably means that your body has already adapted to this weight set and it's no longer being challenged properly.

Sure, you may feel tired after a workout but if there is minimal strain and your chest muscles are powerful enough to sustain more than 20 repetitions at a time, you've grown stronger - and you need to start increasing the intensity of your bench press!

How will I know if the weights are too heavy?

Lifting weights that are too heavy will most likely result in overworked muscles, muscle injuries or joint injuries. If you're trying heavier weights for the first time, test your strength gently.

If you cannot lift your dumbbells or barbells at least eight times in a row, your weights are too heavy.

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Reduce the weight before proceeding with your regular workout. This warning also applies to other resistance training tools such as a Russian kettlebells.

If you can't lift something off the floor, you probably won't be able to curl or swing it. Don't force yourself to do it! Build your strength up and try again in a month. Your body knows exactly what to do - you just need to give it proper nutrition and training and it will do the rest.

II. Feed Your Muscles Enough Protein

How much protein is needed for maximum muscular growth?

Beginning bodybuilders are often confused as to how much crude protein they should be consuming on a daily basis.

The average amount recommended in bodybuilding and advanced fitness books is 80 grams per day. This has been accepted as "staple truth" for many decades, until sport scientists began looking at how our bodies utilized protein when the muscles are under stress.

Current studies suggest that if you've been consuming just 80 grams or less of crude protein per day, you may have been eating too little to encourage maximum muscle growth. It appears that in order to truly maximize the growth potential of all your major muscle groups, you need to consume at least 1 gram of protein for every pound of your current body weight.

Take note that this is the minimum amount needed for building serious mass in your major muscle groups.

I have seen many bodybuilders who gradually increase their protein intake as they slide up the intensity of their workouts (sometimes 50%-70% their initial protein intake) and they get wonderful results.

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Why do we need so much protein in your diet?

Protein is one of the most essential building blocks needed by the human body for normal function.

Our bodies literally cannot grow without protein. That's why people who are not able to consume protein regularly often suffer from protein malnutrition and they look bloated because their body cells do not have sufficient protein for normal production of cellular walls, which keep water inside the cells.

Bodybuilders are a special class of fitness buffs because they engage in demanding activities that put intense strain on the muscle fibers. Muscle fibers are built with protein; that's how it has always been in the Animal Kingdom.

Logically speaking, if you want your muscles to grow in size while you are applying regular stress and strain, you need to feed them more with the right type of nutrient.

Our bodies utilize all 3 macronutrients for energy but only protein satisfies the requirement for physically rebuilding and repairing muscle fibers.

III. The Kingdom of Sleep

Why do bodybuilders require enough sleep every night?

I've met my fair share of people who turn their noses up at the idea of getting sufficient sleep every night.

I've even met a huge guy (probably 300 pounds, shredded) who said that sleep is for babies. I can't argue with the guy's muscles (who may

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have been enjoying the benefits of his genetic lineage) but for 99% of the bodybuilding world, sleep is just as important as proper nutrition.

There are 2 major reasons why you need to get enough sleep:

1. Muscle Repair and Growth – Our bodies cannot utilize protein and other essential nutrients to boost muscle growth.

If there are micro-tears on your muscles as a result of working out in the gym, your body also performs its “muscle maintenance” when you’re asleep. So sleep is definitely not just for babies – it’s for serious bodybuilders, too!

2. GH & Testosterone – These two natural hormones are produced in much higher amounts when a person gets sufficient sleep every night.

This may be linked to the body’s physiological stress response. When a person is stressed, natural production of growth hormone and testosterone is dampened.

Should you eat before going to sleep?

In the interest of providing your major muscle groups all the necessary protein they need for better performance and growth, it is recommended that you consume one regular serving of protein shake two hours before going to sleep.

The extra protein intake will be used to feed your muscles while you are still “out cold.” While it is true that sleep is important, we can’t deny that our bodies starve a little when we are asleep.

How much sleep is recommended?

Seven to eight hours of sleep is recommended for bodybuilders. You also have to develop a good sleep routine. Try to sleep the same time

every night to maintain a healthy body clock. Rise early in the morning and don't perform excess workouts if your body is too weak to do so.

IV. The Positivity Connection

What type of mindset will help you surmount the daily challenges of bodybuilding and fitness, in general?

Let us be clear on one thing: bodybuilding is challenging. Consistent training requires regular workouts at the gym or in an equivalent training facility. These regular workouts can put a tremendous amount of strain on the body.

The natural mental reaction to the physical stress is to think along the lines of "I can't do it anymore" or "I want to give up!" This happens because humans, like other members of the animal kingdom, are instinctually hardwired to avoid pain as much as possible.

Humans are also naturally pessimistic because our ancestors had to be this way to guard against predators, famine and natural disasters.

So instead of thinking of bodybuilding or fitness as an investment for future health and self-confidence, your mind often sees it as a huge expenditure of personal resources (e.g. time, money, energy, relaxation time, etc.).

We cannot undo our instinctual drives but we can work around them. Bodybuilding success begins when you make a conscious effort to remain positive, even if you're feeling depressed or exhausted.

It's normal to feel tired and frustrated – the key is to not let these emotions get in the way of your personal fitness or bodybuilding goals.

Chapter 3: Getting Shredded with Weight Training

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What is weight training and why is it necessary for building lean muscle mass?

Weight training is a resistance training method that makes use of free weights and other common weight training tools such as barbells, cable machines, etc.

Weight training is considered the primary powerhouse method for people who want to cut fat and bulk up. Bodybuilders around the world perform a variety of workouts in the gym using different weight training sets to “get shredded” every single day.

Before you hit the gym with the intent to build lean muscle mass, there are some essential concepts that you have to know first:

I. Maximum Load

What is the relevance of “one rep max?”

The maximum load that a single body part and muscle group can carry in a single movement is called the “one rep max.” One rep max is “one repetition – maximum.” For example, if you can only curl a 25-kilogram dumbbell with your left or right arm, 25 kilograms is your “one rep max” for dumbbell curls.

A person has different “one rep maxes” for each type of movement. The exercises used in weight training are collectively called “movements” because that is precisely what they are!

Establishing a person’s one rep max for specific movements is essential for certified fitness trainers as it tells them a great deal about the individual strengths of each muscle group.

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How is this used for training?

For example, if you're new to bodybuilding your trainer may want to see your one rep max for the bench press so he/she can work his way down the weight chain.

If your one rep max for the classic bench press (hand wide apart, closed grip) is 20 kilograms, you may start benching seven kilograms first so that your chest muscles and arm muscles will become progressively stronger.

II. Area-Specific Training

A training regimen must always have a specific purpose or a set of goals to achieve. Training with no purpose is like driving around aimlessly for miles. It's still an activity but you're not headed anywhere. Before starting any type of physical training, identify your needs and set your goals first.

Do not get carried away by people who seem to be flocking to a single direction (e.g. fad workouts).

Establish your actual needs first before working out in the gym or any other fitness center. When you establish the general parameters of your training regimen, you must then perform area-specific training to ensure that the time and energy you are pouring into the training is maximized.

For example, if you want to build your lower body endurance and strength, you should definitely perform movements that challenge your hip muscles and calves. Curling dumbbells and barbells will not improve your lower body strength!

III. Progressive Straining

What is progressive straining or muscular overloading?

Muscular overloading is a carefully planned process of increasing your total muscular strength by increasing the resistance in your workouts so that your muscles will begin to adapt to progressively heavier sets of weights.

Muscular overloading should be performed with the help of a professional fitness trainer (certified trainers are available around the country) to avoid injury.

There are 2 general ways that you can achieve muscular overloading.

The first method is by increasing the weight that you are using in any chosen movement. For example, if you are used to lifting 20 pounds per arm when performing bicep curls, you can progressively overload your arm muscles by adding two and a half pounds or five pounds.

The second method of muscular overloading is increasing the frequency of a movement. Using the bicep curls exercise as an example again, if you are used to performing three sets of 12 repetitions/set, you can overload your muscles by performing 5 sets of 12 repetitions/set. You can also continue the movement until failure sets in.

IV. Range of Motion

Our muscles and joints have a maximum ROM or range of motion.

You must utilize the full range of motion of each muscle group that you are trying to work out to ensure maximum results. When you are lifting weights, the key is to slow down your movement so your muscle fibers will be challenged completely.

If you want to perform many repetitions to increase the cardio factor of your workout, do so with lighter weights. Never perform high repetitions at high speed with heavy weights as this will most likely result in painful injuries.

What is the first rule of weight training?

The first rule of weight training that you should never forget is to respect your equipment.

Respecting your equipment means you never underestimate the capability of your fitness tools to cause physical harm if they are used improperly. You must make a conscious effort to learn how to use your weights properly and safely to avoid injury.

Individuals who think weight plates, barbells and dumbbells are harmless gym tools are often the ones who experience gym-related injuries more. Treat your equipment with respect and you will have a much better time in the gym.

V. Intensity Matters

What is exercise intensity?

The intensity of a weight training exercise can be measured by the number of repetitions of each movement and the weight or resistance level you are using at the moment.

The safest intensity for all ages and health conditions is low intensity. Low intensity exercise is characterized by using very lightweight weights. You can increase the sets and repetitions of your workouts easily because your muscles will not be strained by the weights.

The intensity recommended for the average fitness enthusiast is moderate intensity. Beginning bodybuilders may use this intensity level so that they can start building their muscular strength and endurance while keeping the risk of injury to a minimum.

Eight to twelve repetitions is the average frequency range for moderate intensity exercises. You may apply the concept of “working out to failure” on your final set to challenge your muscles to adapt to more rigorous movements. You can also add a bit more resistance or weight to whatever exercise tool you are using to make things more challenging.

High intensity exercises are the final frontier for bodybuilders and advanced fitness buffs. The average frequency range for this category of exercise is six to twelve repetitions only because the weights used in high intensity exercises are much higher than what is used in the previous two intensities.

People who engage in high intensity weight training may perform lower repetitions because they use weights that are close to their “one rep max” limitation.

Chapter 4: Correcting Weight Lifting Errors

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What are the common errors when lifting weights?

Lifting weights for the first time is fun, but challenging. Serious movements or exercises are never a joke and you should never treat them as such. This part of the book will reveal to you some common mistakes that can easily be prevented by first-time bodybuilders and fitness enthusiasts.

It is essential that you learn how to lift weights correctly as proper form will be your dependable shield against serious injuries even if you're exhausted and fatigued. Proper form will help minimize injuries should they come and will also improve your ROM or range of motion when performing different movements.

I. Abdominals

The most common exercise used to work out the core muscles or abdominal muscles is the crunch. Sadly, not many people know how to perform this exercise correctly. They get the first part correctly (lying down on the floor) but they fail to perform the upward movement properly.

When you perform a crunch, the prime mover during the exercise should be your abdominal muscles, not your head and neck. Some people find it easier to perform crunches when they lift their body using their head as the lead but this often causes severe neck strain and the core muscles receive insufficient tension for a good workout.

To maintain proper form while performing a crunch, hold your head behind the ears and look at the ceiling instead of trying to see your knees or what's in front of you. Gently lift your back while contracting your abdominal muscles and keep your knees steady as you go up.

II. Squats Gone Wrong

Why perform squats?

The squat is one of the most important movements that you can ever learn because it strengthens the lower region of your body effectively. You will find squats in many fitness and bodybuilding books because it is one of the most effective ways to work out the hips and calves.

What's the common issue with squats?

The problem with many first-time fitness enthusiasts is that they squat incorrectly and this directly increases the risk of knee injury. If you're holding weights while performing a squat, you might even fall over!

When performing a squat, keep your legs parallel to each other and be mindful of your knees. Your knees should never shoot past your "toe line" when you go down. If your knees go past this boundary, you run the risk of tearing ligaments and joints in your knees.

Squat down slowly and stop an inch or two before hitting "toe line."

You can enforce proper form while squatting by imagining that there was a chair behind you and you're sitting on the chair as you go down. You can also perform basic wall squats to train your back and legs to remain steady when squatting.

III. Bench Press Gone Wrong

The bench press is a classic in the annals of bodybuilding because it is one of the most essential ways of training your chest muscles. When you perform a bench press, be sure that your hands are shoulder-width apart. Grip the barbell firmly with both hands and close your fingers around the bar for maximum control.

What's the dead man's grip?

I know that some bodybuilders use the “dead man's grip” to make this exercise more challenging.

However, I have to emphasize that this open-handed grip is fit only for experienced bodybuilders and it has a bad safety track record. In short, it's not safe to begin with and there's always a chance that the barbell will just roll out of your grip and land on your head or neck.

What does back arching mean when you're performing bench presses?

If your back is constantly arching when you lift your barbell off the safety rack, you're lifting too much. You are in serious danger of dropping the barbell on yourself so I would suggest that you reduce the weight that you are pressing and re-learn proper form before starting another complete set.

IV. Pull Down Madness

“Pull downs” are exercises performed using a cable machine. They're great for exercising the back muscles. However, if your form is imperfect then you may also end up injuring yourself instead of building back strength.

When you are performing pull-downs, your back must be kept straight and you must make an effort to remain in the same position throughout the movement. If you feel yourself swaying back and forth, you're performing the exercise incorrectly.

This is just the beginning...

By reading through this handbook, it's obvious that you're serious about getting the rock solid, chiseled body you deserve.

So, where do we go from here?

Well, the only way to gain muscle mass is to get stronger. The more you lift, the more muscle fiber you create, and the more muscle mass you develop.

And you can't just lift the same weight over and over. You need to progressively lift more and more, to keep building muscle mass.

And you know the best lift to keep progressing, and keep building muscle mass?

It's the bench press.

Here's why:

The bench press is easy to track and measure, and easier to increase increments of weight.

Unlike other exercises and gym routines where you have to jump 10 pounds or more to break out of a plateau, the bench press allows you to progress slowly, at the right pace for you.

It's manageable, safer and much more achievable.

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That's why I strongly recommend you focus on the bench press for your core muscle building activity.

You'll gain more muscle mass, more easily, and you'll join millions of other guys who are gaining muscle mass AND burning fat (and getting lean) over the "chunky" guys who are running round the gym like headless chickens.

In society, the bench press is like a measuring stick for your strength and masculinity... but it's not just about stronger arms... it helps build EVERY MUSCLE in your body, and when done right, melts your stubborn fat, even when you sleep.

But before you rush to the gym, [read this article first](#).

You'll see the #1 mistake people make when trying to increase their bench press weight...

... and a critical bench press program you can follow to develop total body strength, lean, mass muscle, and a whole lot of unwanted body fat too.

Whether you're training for the NFL playoffs, or simply want to carry your girl to the bedroom without wimping out, this is the stuff you need to know to get that strength, and that overall body, that you've been dreaming of.

[Read the full article here.](#)