

THE MINDSET MANUAL

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Success Principles and Personal Stories
By Cory Gregory

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*To my immediate family who always believed in me:
Mom, you are the most caring strongest person I know
Frank and Patricia Boone for always being there for us
Papa for being the example of the man I wanted to be when I grew up
Dave Gregory, RIP, I miss you dearly each day
My stepdad Randy Thompson you helped me a ton
Bettina, we've been through it together sis; I love you and I'm super proud of you
Rachael and my kids, Alex, Madelyn and Anden,
this is for you guys, and it's why I work so hard
I will always be here to protect you
You mean the world to me*

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Dustin Myers we living it D just like we said in your garage
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A big thanks to Bill Philips for pushing me over the edge to seriously write this book. I have always wanted to be an author and this really just put it over the top. I have a passion for helping people realize their potential and I thank Bill for helping me to realize mine. The world works in weird ways and I am glad that our paths have crossed.

* * *

One of the major things I've learned as my career has progressed is that balance is not only a major key to success, but also something that can be very hard to make happen. It's easy to just drive, drive, drive toward your goals and forget that balance along the way. I desperately want to be successful and create a great life for my family, but I also need to be put in check every now again. The person who can do that for you is critically important to finding that balance. I have found the perfect person for me in my wife, Rachael. She has an uncanny ability to put things in perspective at just the right time, and

that's been vitally important on the road to the success I've achieved. She always gives me support but it comes from a different point of view, which is important in developing the right mindset and reaching your goals.

I met Rachael at a party, only 3-4 months after leaving the coal mine and moving to Columbus. I met her briefly, but didn't see her for a few months. I met her again on spring break in Panama City - not exactly the location where you expect to meet your future wife, lol. I have been with Rachael ever since and I can say wholeheartedly there is no way I would be where I am today if I didn't have her tremendous support, as well as her alternative viewpoint.

People ask me all the time "How have you stayed with one woman when you are involved in an industry with beautiful women everywhere?" For me, the answer is easy. My wife has been there for me since day one and has always believed in me; no matter how wild some of my ideas seemed at the time. I can't stress enough how valuable and important that kind of support is to improve all aspects and areas of your life. Rachael painted the walls of the first gym, fully supporting my decision to start my own business when I was 20 years old. She has helped me a great deal through all the numerous transitions, from my gym to the stress involved with running a business like MusclePharm.

There is one moment that really stands out and really emphasizes how important her perspective and point of view has been. It's also a good reminder of how critical it is to have someone supporting you, and being honest with you at the same time. So, one day I was kind of down on myself when we were struggling through the early days at MusclePharm. She noticed my mood and said, "Cory, snap out of it. People want to be around you and involved with this business because they know you're a winner. Quit moping around, snap out of it and get back to your normal mentality." It was the kick in the ass and the honesty I needed.

Rachael has been there for me through all the ups and downs, and has watched this whole dream come to fruition over the past 16 years. We are definitely a team and it has definitely been a blessing to have her in my life.

Rachael, I want to say from the time I saw you in Florida, to the day you walked down the aisle on our wedding day, through the birth of each of our three kids, it's been an amazing life with you. I know you're a huge reason why we were able to realize all of these goals. I appreciate that you set your teaching career aside after working so hard to earn your master's degree in order to raise our family and help support me on this crazy journey. I joke with you all the time, but I wanted to take this opportunity, from the bottom of my heart, to say thank you and I love you.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
#1 Find Your Driving Force	3
How I was molded from humble beginnings	
#2 Get Up Early	15
Why this changed my life in several ways	
#3 Write And Clearly Define Your Goals	26
How this organizes your success	
#4 Don't Be Afraid To FAIL.....	36
My first cover shoot: Epic Fail	
#5 Daily Perspective	45
The worst day of my life	
Extra Chapter: Mark Rine Story	
#6 Be Relentless	57
Knocking on the door	
#7 Be A Gamer, Seize The Day	66
Getting Arnold Schwarzenegger to be my business partner	
#8 Self-Educate	77
When school ends your real-world education starts	
#9 Urgency	85
How I started my first gym at age 20	

#10 Just Be You	97
Don't let outside influence change you personally	
#11 Mentorship	108
The people who have molded me into who I am today	
#12 Take Care of Yourself	117
Training Articles & Advice	

INTRODUCTION

I wanted to write a book to help explain why most people think I'm crazy. The principles and stories in this book will shed some light on why I am who I am. The pages are tales of struggles and success, highlighted by key situations that led me to this point. I also wanted to shed light on how I was molded into this person so people can see it took years for me to develop. I learned at the young age of 19 that my passion for fitness was the only route for me. I only liked to lift weights and nothing else, except for sports, and I knew early on in high school I wasn't likely going to be a professional in any sport. I thought I was in deep trouble and so did my family because, let's face it, how am I going to make money lifting weights? That concept is extremely obscure in the coal mining country where I grew up. No one here, and I mean no one, makes money that way. I had never met anyone at that time that did either, so it was a very abstract idea.

Since my career has evolved, I find that I not only enjoy teaching fitness but also teaching about mindset. The mindset is derived from what I learned in the gym and dealing with real life struggles. My good friend Arnold Schwarzenegger is right: all gym discipline spills into life, and if you continue to apply those same principles you apply in the gym to your life, you can be very successful. This can lead you to reach levels that even you can't begin to grasp. I am able to do things I never thought in my wildest dreams would happen or were even possible. I could conceptualize the initial part of what I wanted and that's a big part and a start. I always knew I wanted to own my own gym and be on the cover of magazines. However, to start a huge

company and work with guys like Arnold and Tiger Woods, is just plain crazy! My parents and grandparents did a great job molding me into a productive adult. The struggles I faced growing up were also important because they helped me become more driven in order to achieve what I wanted. I feel like maybe you don't have to experience my struggles personally, but maybe you can identify with me through this book and apply these principles to your own life.

My hopes are that you can learn from my experiences like I have from others to better yourself. This is the mindset it takes and the pace you have to keep if you want to become successful. I have enjoyed the ride; it's been painful at times but extremely rewarding also. I know this book will mold and help shepherd some young and old souls along. It's an easy read that will leave an impact on you. I want this to be a working manual for the rest of your life that you can always come back to. I hope you enjoy my crazy mind and passion to be successful. Thus, I give you *The Mindset Manual*.

CHAPTER 1

FIND YOUR DRIVING FORCE

*1970's Trailer I grew up in (BEFORE) \$100 per month rent
My House After 15 years in business (AFTER)*



"Why stay the same when you can get better each day?"

I would like to start with a question: **What do you want with this life?** I know, “Wow! Right out of the gate I get hit over the head with a big question to answer.” However, the answer to this question is the foundation you need in order to plan and achieve your dreams. I will compare it to building a house. When you build a house, it is vital to have a strong foundation because if you don’t, it is only going to crumble, over and over again. If the foundation is not ultra-strong and, in this case, meaningful to you, it can’t withstand any storm or adversity.

I believe a lot of the problem with peoples daily motivation is that they do not truly know what they want. Answering the question, “**What do you want with this life?**”, helps you focus on your goals and will fast track the process of you living your dream. On the other hand, if you get up every day and just aimlessly roll through life without a focus on your goals, it creates a habit. This habit is not getting you any closer to achieving your dreams. Going to the nine-to-five and punching a time clock for a job you’re not passionate about creates a habit. Its just what you do. This is a drone mentality and you are mindlessly giving up on your dreams. Before you know it, 30 years have gone by and you’ve got nothing to show for it but “what ifs” and “shoulda, woulda, coulda.” That life is not for me, and it shouldn’t be for you either. You want to make sure that the habit you’re creating is one that will get you closer to doing something your passionate about and closer to achieving your dreams.

I wanted to create a life for myself that I could be excited about. I spring out of bed every dat at 4 a.m. and my work is not work—it’s something I look forward to every day. Even when it’s a bit painful, it’s a challenge that I look forward to each and every day. I wanted a real plan that came from a point of passion. I set my mind on my goal and put it into action in a major way every day. I dreamed of how I wanted it to look. I think we all have had this vision of how we want our life to be. In this chapter I will explain to you how

to keep your vision focused and use it to help drive you towards your goals. That's the key: taking that vision and molding it into reality, into a plan that you can execute. We all have grand dreams but we don't all turn them into reality. With the help of this book, I want you to make a plan, execute it, and turn them into more than just dreams. I want you to turn them into the reality that you live EVERY day.

To get there, I developed a daily statement of what I want for myself. The statement should produce a feeling in you every time you hear it, because then having the motivation to work towards this daily statement will never be an issue. Here's how I developed my daily statement: I asked myself, "**What do you want out of this life?**" Here's my answer: I want to start generations of wealth for the Gregory's in my family. I want to do it in such a way that my grandkids benefit years down the road from what I'm doing right now. I always joke that I want my grandkids to say, "Grandpa was a "G". I also want to be the one of the most impactful people in the fitness industry and help as many people as possible through fitness and mindset. That is what I get up every day to do. That is my constant driving force, my constant vision and it never changes. Once I determined my dreams, I then linked it all together into one statement that stands as my daily statement: "I want to be one of the most impactful people in my industry and change generations of Gregory's forever with what I accomplish in this life." This statement hits me to the core. If I become impactful and teach people how to get better mentally and physically through my skill set, it will forever change my family history. This is a pretty bold statement; it has high aspirations. Your daily statement has to be bold because it's a daily mantra that takes years to accomplish. The drive has to be relentless in order to accomplish this daily statement or it will never come to fruition.

The principles I write about in this book can only be applied after you determine your driving force. It's important that everyone establishes their

driving force. I know everybody's driving force is different, and it should be. I want you to dig deep and find what yours is. What do you want from this life? This driving force, your driving force, is what's inside you. What do you want to do and accomplish? What mark do you want to personally leave on this life? I want you to keep in mind that it doesn't matter if anyone else thinks it's right or wrong, it's personal. It's really no one's business. But it must be something you're passionate about and something that moves you and drives you everyday. I also don't want you to be afraid of thinking big. If you're passionate about it, don't be afraid to be bold and think big. It doesn't matter if it seems absurd to some people. My vision has always made people second-guess the possibilities. It just seemed too far-fetched for some people to believe. But that comes with the territory when it comes to dreaming big.

I come from a hardcore, blue-collar background; my internal blueprint messaging was instilled. I had to change "the money doesn't grow on trees" mantra that was pounded into my head. I was around a lot of closed-minded stuff and that just never resonated with me. I learned something very powerful by how I grew up: If you can have a solid driving force with a true blue-collar work ethic, the results can be scary great. If you are willing to work hard and you're truly passionate about it, there's nothing that can stop you from achieving your dreams and living a life you are passionate about.

I would like to share with you a personal story from when I was younger that helped mold me into this driven machine:

Why and how I Established My Driving Force

I'm coming home from school on a normal day. I jump off the bus and walk into the late-1970's white trailer where I grew up. I was about 15 at the time, and I was just starting to think about what I wanted to do with my life when I got older. I then saw my mom's W-2 tax document sitting on the table. She made \$8,000 that year.

My dad left when I was around 11 years old. He still lived close by, but my mom raised us. Her income, and her income only, was what we lived off of at this time, and it was shocking to see on paper. I was thinking to myself: How are we living on \$8000 a year?! My grandparents Frank and Patricia Boone always had to help us, and my mom worked crazy hours and two jobs. Our white 1970's single-wide trailer cost \$100 per month rent. Even as I write this book, I can remember, plain as day, my mom having trouble paying for it. The fact that this was our reality was so crazy to me, and I truly feel for the struggle my mom endured each day. I appreciate her so much for working as hard as she could to provide for us. This was a tough time in our lives to say the least. I knew from that day forward that I had to figure out how I could make 8k per month—not 8k per year. I believe that day was a conscious turning point for me and it is something that has stuck with me and really impacted my driving force. I vowed to change the struggle, somehow, someday. I do need to say that I never did without or starved when I was growing up. Many people have it much worse. My wonderful mother Michelle and my grandparents always took care of me, but feeling the financial stress on a household can break you. I really think this among other things was what drove my parents apart over the years. It's hard to constantly battle financial stress and that is something we had to endure for a number of years.

I often think back to stories from my youth that make me drive hard for success today as an adult. One day when I was about 10 years old, it was pretty cold in the house. I remember doubling up my blankets that night and really never thinking anything of it. For me, it was just normal at the time. I walked into my kitchen of the duplex we were renting at the time. The stove was popped open with the glowing hot electric rods giving off heat. I could see by the look on my mom's face that she was making due with the situation the best she knew how. I huddled up by my little sister Bettina prior to school and I realized that stove was what was heating the house. This house and a lot



"My mom Michelle is one of the strongest, most selfless people I have ever known. She is truly an amazing person."

of houses from this timeframe ran on what's called "heater oil." To fill up the oil tank for the winter could cost up to \$1,000, depending on oil prices. My mom shared with me years later that someone anonymously paid for our tank to be filled when we were gone one day and never came forward. So whoever you were, thanks from us.

A few months later, I was walking downstairs in the same duplex. I noticed my mom crying as she was shutting the front door. I could see it in her face that she was upset and stressed. I could see the hurt in her

eyes, which, to this day, seems so real when I think back. I looked out the window to see who was walking away from my front door, and it was a local businessman. He was a former coal miner who poured all this money into a gas station and convenience store. He was a true self-made millionaire whom I looked up to as I got older. At that time, he owned the property we lived in. We had been months behind on rent, and he was there giving my mom the bad news that we were going to need to find another place to live. All of this happened prior to me going into sixth grade and, to be blunt, it was a really difficult time. I might have been young and it might have been years ago, but some of it still feels real as hell. It is a true and lasting emotion that changes you and makes memories last longer because they change you. From an early age I just felt and saw so much financial stress in my family that it made me want to learn about money and how to make a lot of it, no matter how hard I had to work. I didn't want to continue the cycle of this stress and worry.

I was determined to break the cycle. I use all of those vivid memories as motivation and inspiration, in order to drive me. We had the miners going on strike, my mom working multiple jobs just to get by, and our family stress was always present. As I got older, I started to understand that my parents both worked very hard to get ahead, as they say, but it was an ongoing struggle. I knew something would have to change for me not to experience and/or repeat the cycle. I knew I was going to work hard, much like my parents did, but I was determined to make sure that my hard work would ease my family's financial burden. I just had to find my driving force and follow it passionately.

“Once again, I’m not against first car beaters—but I just wanted my door handles to work.”

When I was 16, one of my first cars was a Plymouth Horizon beater. I believe your first car should be rough because you are going to beat it up—it’s inevitable. This car had different color doors and was a pieced-together masterpiece. It really was the definition of a first-car beater. Once again, I’m not against first car beaters—but I just wanted my door handles to work.

My dad Dave Gregory, RIP, thought he would fix me up real well. Plymouth Horizons always had poorly made door handles; they would snap off after a while just from regular use. I had broken every door handle, except for the rear passenger side. With that, let me paint you a picture: only one door handle works on this multi-colored car—so how are you supposed to get in to drive it? It’s very humbling and embarrassing, no matter how cool you think you are, to climb in from the passenger-side rear door of your car. There’s really no other way to put it. The worst was after school or when I would go to get gas. I used to hope no one would see me get into the passenger-side rear door—it was so humiliating and humbling. I might have had the world’s fastest get-in time from the back seat, if such a contest existed. Like I said, the worst was when I would get gas; I would try to set the door against the hinge

like it was closed, but it wasn't. The problem was that I would forget and just do what everyone else would do and actually close the door. Being at a busy gas station and having to climb in the opposite back door sucked. I am not crying, "Woe is me—why didn't I have a BMW or even a Honda Accord?" I didn't care about that. But I had two different-colored doors and only one working door handle. I just wanted them to open properly. So then my dad really thought he would fix my door handle problem. I came home from practice one day and he had an unreal set up going. He had a dog chain attached to the inside of the latch running across my door. He had drilled a hole in the door so he could hook a pipe up on the outside as a makeshift door handle. He was proud of it and I guess I was happy I didn't have to get in through the back door but now I have a pipe bomb mounted on the outside of my car. Two days later, I was walking out to my car after school and three kids were just standing there pointing and laughing at my car. I remember thinking, go-ahead and laugh but when I get done with school I am going accomplish things nobody thought was possible. That moment immediately went in the memory banks as motivation. I'm not salty at those people who will remain nameless. I'm not salty because that experience actually pushed me into another gear that I needed to become a driven machine. Occurrences like this you never forget and they last forever. How you use them can really help you achieve your goals and serve your driving force. I know these are just material things but at that time it was a big deal and, either way, it served as motivation years later so thanks for making fun of my pipe bomb door handle.

These days, it's also probably why having a really nice car is important to me and has been since I started making money of any significance. But I used that memory to drive me to do something bigger and better and be more than the guy driving around a car with one working door handle.

All of the stories here are what helped me mold my driving force. The purpose is not just about me; it's about changing generations and teaching wealth along with work ethic and respect. I'm thankful each day for how I was brought up and how it molded me into who I am today. I wouldn't change it for the world. I love my mom; she did whatever she had to do for my sister Bettina and I. I lived these stories above, plus much more along the way. These are stories that remind me why I don't get tired and why the fire never goes out. This drive is real; it means something, and it fuels me every day. Everyone reading this has his or her own version of what has molded their lives along with tales of personal hardships. I'm sure some of you reading this have had it much worse and some may not. The point is not who has it good or bad; its how you make it better, what you want for yourself, and what you want for your family. Ask yourself these major questions; along with the others I pose in the first few paragraphs in this chapter.



Years later I stopped by and the trailer is long gone

Find Your Driving Force Work Space

What would you do with your time if you had all the money in the world?

What are you good at? Do you have any unique skills?

Take your answers from questions 1 & 2 and define your passion. Write it down.

Identify 3 books you can read about your passion.

List the three goals you need to accomplish to make your passion a reality.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

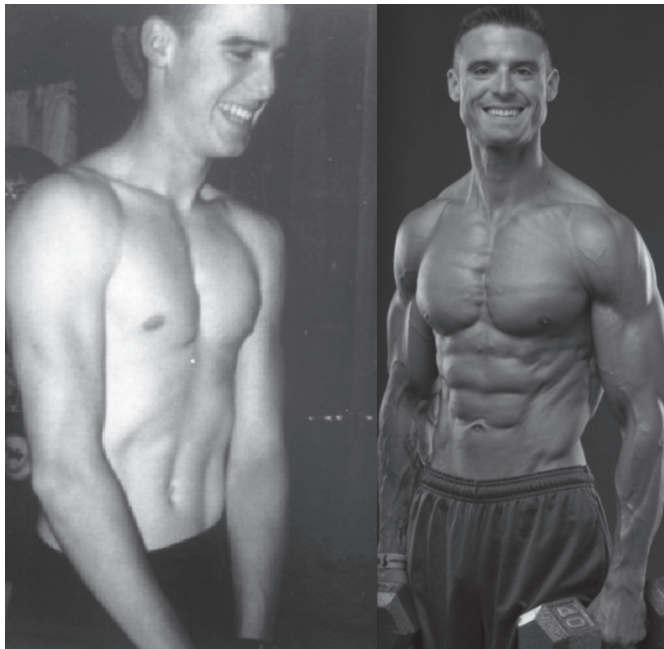
THE MINDSET MANUAL Success Principles and Personal Stories

Now put it all together: What is your daily statement? For example, mine is:
I want to be one of the most impactful people in my industry plus change
generations of Gregory's forever with what I accomplish in this life.

CHAPTER 2

GET UP EARLY

*My sophomore year in High School 16 years old (BEFORE)
One of my covers shoots at age 35. (AFTER)*



“Wake your ass up! Quit being soft! Set some goals!”

The alarm goes off and the clock reads 4 a.m. I shut off my phone and hop out of bed. I know what you’re thinking: “What? 4 a.m.! I can’t do that!” Well, keep an open mind and keep reading, I just might change your mind - or at least alter it a little bit. Getting up early is really uncomfortable, but guess what? When you’re uncomfortable, you’re getting better. Now that I explained how the first two minutes of my day starts out, I’m going to explain how the first 30 minutes go for most people.

Let’s see if this is you: Most people set their alarm between 6:30 to 7 a.m. The alarm goes off, and they immediately hit snooze to delay the enviable. First mistake. The snooze button is one of the laziest inventions in the history of the world. Because, guess what, five to 30 minutes of hitting snooze off and on doesn’t do you any good. What’s that doing for you? What happens if you compounded those minutes snoozing over a 10-year period of time? How much more could you accomplish? All that hitting the snooze is saying is I want to be lazy for five more minutes. Stop doing that to yourself. Get up! Get a jump on the world! I’ve met many millionaires and plenty more amazing people from a financial standpoint. None of them sleep in, which has helped them remain active in the game. That was all I needed to learn to know how my mornings needed to go. They’re all up early, getting a jump on the world. Someone is always gunning for you and wants your spot in life. I feel like right now I’m on top of my game, but there’s somebody somewhere who’s saying, “I’m going to get Cory—that’s the spot I want.” There is always a driven person who wants your spot, which keeps me hungry to keep pushing for the spot in front of me. This is why daily habits are so key and can produce really great results. But if you deviate from them, it can crumble just as fast. If I start slacking, and I sleep until 6 a.m. for a year, I’m leaving the

door wide open for someone else who is getting up at 4 a.m. and putting in two more productive hours of work than me. The best thing about getting up early is how productive you become. At that time, who's bothering you? I'm a huge believer in the fact that everyone needs time for themselves. The quiet and calm are what does it—no one's bothering you at that hour, that's for sure! My phone is not ringing; my wife and kids are sleeping and, for the most part, so is the rest of the world. That's when I can get a jump on almost everybody! I can do everything I need to do to get ahead of my competition and make myself better. I know for a fact not enough people set aside time for themselves to get better daily, which is a major thing I want to see people change after reading this book.

Everyone is so busy with life that this quickly falls by the wayside, but if you apply this principle now, you would have time to train the body and the mind daily. I know what you're thinking: "But won't I be tired?" I am not going to lie: sometimes you will be tired, but again I say, "So what?" Forget about minor struggles and inconveniences and focus on the benefits. The trade-off for a healthy mind and body is not even close. If I said you will get 1.5 to 2 hours sleep less per day, but you'll look better, feel more confident, have less body fat, and be more focused, I bet you would sign up before I could even finish. Most people can read an additional 50 books per year this way. That's just one example of how you can better yourself. I want you to think of the difference in mindset this would make daily. Honestly, it's life changing, and I don't use that term lightly. You can literally change almost everything about your life and all of it is positive. How could you possibly pass that up? People who have their driving purpose in life plus utilize this "extra" or "bonus" time are dangerous. In essence, it's unlimited potential you've set up for yourself in two easy steps.

It doesn't take long for the body - and your brain - to fall into line. Once the body adapts, you will start to look forward to this ultimate time of high

production. I wrote this entire book between 4 to 5 a.m. basically because that was the only time I could carve out of my busy schedule. When you dedicate yourself to this, it will open your eyes to being able to accomplish so much more and allow you to open your mind to new material. I would recommend that after you identify the true driving purpose for yourself, which I spoke about in Chapter 1, you implement a few quick things: 1) never use the snooze button again; and 2) start with getting up just one hour earlier to help the body adapt, then work toward two hours earlier. If you have one hour for the body and one hour for the mind, you can have a serious impact on your life. Break that down over a month, and you've created 30 hours for your body and 30 hours for your mind, which can lead to impressive changes. Think of the possibilities! I can't stress enough how much better and more accomplished the people feel in everyday life who dedicate themselves to this process. I speak to people almost daily who can't get over how or why I get up so early. The results speak for themselves: my body of work in my life has come from a high level of focus as a result of this one daily habit.

“First mistake. The snooze button is one of the laziest inventions in the history of the world.”



Why Did I Start Getting Up Early?

I have set huge goals for myself, and as my career got busier and my family grew bigger, something had to give. I wasn't really willing to give up anything: my family, my business, or my goals. And certainly not my training in the gym, either. This is a crossroad where I think a lot of people give up and give in to the excuses: “well I'm

old now” or “it’s time to be a dad, so I guess my time is over”. Maybe you just tell yourself that time has just passed you by and your dream of starting that business or writing that book has ended. I hear people say stuff like this all the time just talking out loud to make themselves feel better. I say to them what I said to myself, “Take a hard look at your schedule and, instead of giving up, find a solution. How can you give up on your dream(s) or goal(s) so easily?” I think, for the most part, they are major procrastinators, so it’s an easy copout. I used to get up at 6 a.m., workout by 7 a.m., and then start my workday by 9 a.m. like the rest of the world. I am in the fitness industry, so I never missed workouts, but my personal development was slacking and that eventually led to my workouts suffering. The domino effect was noticeable and I knew I needed to change something. I took my schedule seriously and said, instead of working out at 7 a.m., it’s time to start going to the gym at 5 a.m. This meant I would have to be up between 4 to 4:30 a.m. to implement the new me. I could train and read daily, plus still get to work earlier—it’s a beautiful thing really. It took time for the body to adjust, but I kept at it, the body adapted and the process has opened up doors and possibilities that would have never happened before.

This being said, let me also turn back the clock about 15 years. I want to set the stage on how I first knew I could consistently get up at this time.

I’m in the washhouse, which is the locker room at the Cadiz porthole, the name of the underground coal-mine I worked in for a summer. I had just put on my hardhat and cap light. It’s 5:08 a.m. in the morning. My stepdad Randy is standing there; he has been underground, working his ass off almost his entire adult life like most of my family has. Randy and my mother, Michelle, got married my senior year in high school. He had the rough task of taking on a father figure role late in my life, which I wouldn’t wish on anyone, especially since I had been the man of the house since 11. But he gave me the opportunity to work at the mine to better myself, and I will be forever

thankful for it. I learned a lot of lessons underground that summer. Like the gym, I applied almost all of them to many aspects of my life.

So I'm in the washhouse, and I say to Randy, "When I'm done mining this summer, and I save my money, there is no way in hell I'll ever work a job again where I have to get up at 4 a.m. This is just ridiculous!" Never say never, right? But at this time of my life, at 19 years old, I was certain that, no matter what happened, I was sure of this statement. Randy laughed and said, "I'll remember that, but for now let's jump on the elevator [which takes us 600 feet underground] and go spread dust. It's time to work." That day, I was helping him spread rock dust, which is the limestone-based dust we use in the coal mine to help prevent combustion so we don't blow up. Most of the coal-mine is black, but a lot of it is actually white from all the rock dust miners spread all over the walls and the ground.

The summer I worked as a coal miner taught me a lot. I can be effective at 4 to 5 a.m., and I can also work 20 hours per day if I want to or if the situation calls for it. My driving force was strong enough that it pushed me to get up early, stay late, and pretty much live there for five months. My biggest paycheck had a billable 93 hours in one week. I have worked hard for everything I have, and this job especially taught me what "a means to an end" really means. I truly had an underlying short- and long-term goal, which drove me each day to keep putting in that hard work. I learned that, no matter how bad the day's work was or how uncomfortable it was, it would all be worth it. I knew my dream of moving away on my own with my own money and chasing my dream would become a reality. I just had to put in the work, and I wasn't afraid to earn what was going to be mine. The life I could see in a distant future could be made possible by a driving determination and a focused vision.

Plain and simple, I will do what it takes to win, and sacrificing sleep is a given for my goals without question. If this isn't how you feel towards your goal then it's evident you don't want it bad enough. I'm going to be blunt with you in that regard. If you're not willing to sacrifice something so small as an hour or two of sleep, then it's apparent to me you're not completely passionate about your goals or vision. I did it once in my life in harsh conditions, so why not do it again but in a field I am passionate about? To be honest, it's a cakewalk to get up early to feed my passions compared to doing it previously to work in the mine. If I can't get up early to do what I love and learn more about my profession and develop myself, then something's wrong. I didn't even have to ponder the answer to the question, "how can I make it better", once I took a deep dive into my schedule. I would say 99 percent of people will ignore this answer, are not willing to do it, and will not separate themselves from the pack. That's my challenge to you. Make a change, get up earlier, and see what happens.

Once I implemented this, a lot started to happen. My new workout time back then became my new work time; it became an evolution of my business then back to my personal time. This was part of the process of owning my own life. Growing my business was a priority so I could survive. Once my personal training business started taking off, I did the numbers on what would happen if I set out to find an early morning group of clients. If they are driven like myself and willing to get up that early, then training them should be fun. If I could get five clients per hour from 5 to 6 a.m. and again from 6 to 7 a.m., I could make \$250 and have 10 billable hours at \$25 per hour per client by 7 a.m. So once again, getting up early changed my life. I was making twice as much as a trainer because I had serious people who did not miss workouts. This evolution helped me find a whole new reliable client base, and I maximized my time. I was back to training myself at 7 a.m. for a few years, but the overall evolution was huge for my business. It again went

back to the principle of getting up two hours earlier to get a step closer to my goals.

This is the ultimate separator that completely changes the game, yet it is so completely simple if you think about it. If you can mentally get through the fact that you're up easily three hours before everyone else, then you have a shot at making it, and that's the extra effort it takes and took me to be successful.

Think about this: if we both own the same business, but I get up for five years in a row at 4 a.m. (going to bed at 11pm) and you get up at 7 a.m., I have logged almost 5,500+ more hours toward my goal. How much further ahead would I be? The time is super-productive with the calm and quiet of the morning with no distractions. The compound effect of that amount of productive effort is an extreme advantage. It's a mindset that may seem uncomfortable, and I meet people every day who can't fathom it. Open up your mind and turn on that animal. Don't be afraid to be a little uncomfortable for a little while. The compound effect is truly just a small amount of consistent work daily that continues to pile on and pile on until it becomes something great. This is why I always say I don't do anything extra special each day, but I just don't fucking miss. I say this because if I grind with a purpose and plan, it will pay off in the years to come. I am certain of it. The faster you realize this the better your accomplishments will be, not only now, but in the future.



"The summer I worked as a coal miner taught me a lot. I can be effective at 4 to 5 a.m., and I can also work 20 hours per day if I want to or if the situation calls for it."

Up Early to Train Work Space

What time do you get up now & why?

Do you feel like you have enough time to chase your dream now? How many hours per day do you work on it?

Plan out exactly what you could do with the time if you got up an extra 2 hours earlier.

CHAPTER 3

WRITE AND CLEARLY DEFINE YOUR GOALS



The day that Arnold stopped by to see us at Old School Gym. Arnold, myself, and Dustin Myers.

“I think we should own a gym one day and get paid to lift weights.”

Write and Clearly Define Your Goals

So now you're up early or at least making the commitment to do so. That's a good start. But what are your goals? Getting the ideas out of your head and onto paper brings it closer to reality. It's amazing how much of an impact a single-subject Mead notebook can have on your life. With what, a dollar, you can literally help shift your perspective into reality. I've got a pile of them at my house from the last 10 years with brainstorming and goals, and all sorts of other wild ideas written all over the place. My wife makes fun of me, kidding around about my notebooks all over my office, but I definitely wouldn't be where I currently am without putting a lot of work into them. Even today, I just sit there go back through them for reference to training, diets and overall goals and mindsets for all aspects of my life. I write out my six goals that I'm pressing hard to work toward each day, a practice that I can't recommend enough. I picked six for some reason. It just seemed natural to me. For you, it can be five or 10 but every year I try to have 6-8 that stand out. There is something magical about actually writing down and saying the goals out loud daily. This might sound cheesy, but even if you don't say them out loud, writing them down daily helps a ton. You have to do this; it's ultra-important because, if you don't see them, they are out of sight and out of mind. At that point, it's really not a whole lot more than a daydream. When you write them down, it makes them a real tangible thing that can be accomplished. It's staring you in the face each and every day, giving you a constant reminder of the big picture. It's so key for those days when you may not feel as motivated. Take one look at those goals, write them down, read them aloud, and your perspective on the whole day may change.

It could be a short-term goal. I want to lose 10 pounds. I want to get this promotion at work. Whatever it is, it's your thing and meaningful to you. Make them your goals and fully own them. People read mine sometimes and think I'm half-crazy, but that's part of the reason why I have been successful. I have no ceiling on what I think I can accomplish, and that's the mindset it takes. But make sure it's about you and relevant to you and something you're passionate about. Don't copy someone else's goal. Make your goals genuine to yourself.

I call it self-accountability. Because, at the end of the day, you have to ask yourself, "What did I do today to help accomplish my goals?" Maybe nothing. Maybe a little bit. Maybe something. So it makes you just consciously remember on a daily basis and work toward what you're after on a consistent basis. Overall, however, you must chart your progress if you want to accomplish your goals.

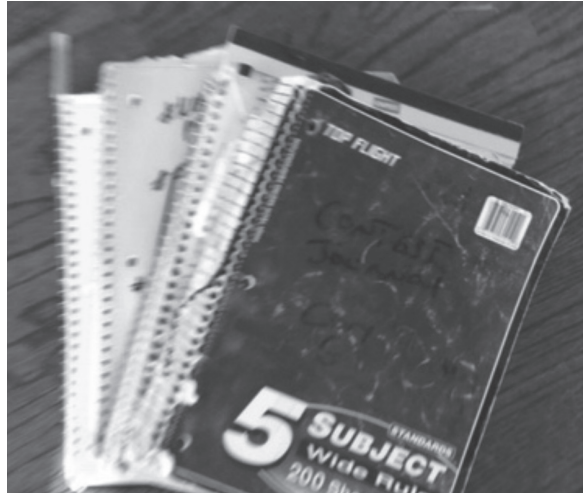
The idea for this came from my friend, Todd Crawford, whose grandfather, Blaine, just recently passed away. His grandfather had been a farmer and was in his late 90s. He had notebooks from 1952 all the way until today. He detailed and kept himself accountable on everything, every day. What he ate, what he did, where the oats were planted on the farm. It was amazing. You can go back to September 17, 1978, and see what the weather was like and what was going on. It was pretty awesome to see, and it showed me that he was in charge of his life and was in charge of the direction he wanted it to take. Essentially, I just modeled that practice and used it for my goal-setting process.



Blaine & Todd Crawford

Why I Started Doing This

The daily value I gained by charting what I do and how I feel is unreal. My daily actions toward my goals became extremely valuable from the first day I did them. I started by writing my goals down at the beginning of each year, plus I began each day by writing down my driving force statement. My processes have evolved and changed a bit over time, but those two things have essentially stayed the same. I love the daily reminders of the short-term goal mixed with my overall plan. It's almost a daily spark to keep me pushing forward. Knowing the nature of my business and my goals, I am always prepping for shows or meets. I found a high value in writing down training diets, supplementations, and feelings about how things are going. It gives me a daily progress report to keep me in tune with what's working/not working, what needs to be changed, and what I need to keep doing. It's also an easy reference for me to go back and find something that was working at that time and rework it back into my life or training. I still, to this day, refer back to my old Mead notebooks. I have documented when I was in unreal condition for magazine covers. I also documented when I was super strong, so I can always go back to see what I was doing, how I was taking my supplements, training, and eating. If it's written down, it can be read and redone again; if it's not, it might be



"People read my notebooks sometimes and think I'm half-crazy, but that's part of the reason why I have been successful"

forgotten and gone forever. I definitely don't want that. I used to tell all my clients after they meet me for the consultation to write down what they eat and at what times for the next three days. My health and your health could be two different things. It never fails—every client is astonished by what they were actually eating and when. It's a hard, but also honest, look at yourself on paper—the real you, not the “you” made up in your head. It's definitely a “welcome to reality” moment when it is staring you in the face. This could be the reason why you can't reach your fitness and life goals. The pages don't lie: they are documenting action or the lack thereof and the only person responsible for all of it is you. If you are unhappy with your weight, or the business you're in isn't how you want it to be, then take a look at your daily habits. They tell the truth. When the truth is told, and you are writing it down, it makes the action to change it faster and easier.

Sample Journal Set Up (See it virtually at corygfitness.com)

I got up at 4:10am today



BodyWeight:193

Daily Ramble: Today is going to be exciting. I love Saturday bodybuilding days at old School Gym for a few reasons. One, we start with bodybuilding not squats so it's just different. We get a legit vanity pump first - lol. Then its time to nut up and see what we can do with 315 on squat. I love this challenge because I usually feel a little rough by Saturday but I enjoy getting out of my comfort zone to attack 315 tired. My goal is to hit this for 20 reps soon and then get 365 for 8-10 on these days. After my workout I am finishing up content on the site and getting ready for my second Thanksgiving where I will fast all the way until we eat. Finally, we have a family outdoor football game or go to my office to play basketball after the OSU vs. Michigan game. I attended the no. 1 vs no. 2 game at Ohio State years ago and it was an unreal feeling to rush the field after we won. That's a memory I'll never forget. Also, I am gonna slam some beers today, too...#AnabolicFasting baby!

Driving purpose Statement

I will be one of the most impactful fitness people of my current generation and help millions of people.

I will change the Gregory family for generations with what I achieve.

Business & Training Goals Currently

Members at Coryfitness.com in over 100 countries (24 now)

Best selling author #MindsetManual

Elite Powerlifter Raw & Extreme at 181 total needs to be 1396 Raw 1642 Extreme (in power gear)

Start a marketing firm

Cover #12



Pull 600lbs

Todays Workout:

WoW Crazy PUMP #squatlife 5.0 Bodybuilding Day

Incline barbell 115-135 (high touch point wide grip) failure sets: I got 40,25,20,18

Wide grip pulldown 20 reps Super-set with Feet up Bench 135 failure sets: 25,20,17,15

Behind the neck pull downs - 20 Super-set DB pullovers - 20 reps ; Chest Flys -15 reps 4 sets

Back Squat 135x5 225x5 315x13

Food: #Anabolic Fasting Diet

More info at Corygfitness.com

My January 1st Tradition

It started in Y2K the year 2000 and after the ball drops, no matter if I had drinks or not and no matter what time it is, before I go to bed I get super serious. I had thought about it all day but I then make a real decision on what I am going to put all my efforts into that next year. Of course, it can change but I always want to create a real set of goals as I also reflect on what I accomplished in the previous calendar year. I almost get pissed if I don't reach the stuff I had set the prior year and I always think what could I have done to fix that. This project, completing this book, is one I said I would finish by the end of 2015. I wrote that down in 2014 so I hustled to get this bad boy done as fast as possible so I don't get mad and carry over this goal to 2016.

This type of tradition makes me start to think about the next year and really take it seriously. I would advise to start doing this, drunk or not, on January 1st. Simply take 15 minutes and reflect on the previous year's goals and on the new ones ahead in the upcoming year. Remember that once you write them down they become much more real. Drink one for me because it's a toast from what you accomplished the year prior but also a toast of what's to come.

Write and Clearly Define Your Goals Work Space

What are the top six goals you want to accomplish over the next 12 months?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Write one thing you can start doing today for each goal that will help you attain it.
This is the first action list.

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Review these each day when you wake up.

CHAPTER 4

DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL



Eleven-Time Cover Model

"Its only a failure if you don't learn anything from your experience and you give up."

Plain and simple, if you are afraid to fail then that will hinder your ability to try new things and to take risks. The fact is if there is no risk taken then no reward will be given. The great Michael Jordan repeatedly said you have to fail to be successful; it drives you. It's basically a numbers game—but are you willing to endure the numbers and the hardships to be on top?

That is a question to ask yourself. So many things will go wrong along a real journey to build something great. Nothing of any real magnitude has been built without heartache and hardship to overcome. I always push through because I only fail if I give up. That is the only true sign of failure. The rest are simply roadblocks. That's my definition. If you are still plugging away, even if you have a setback it simply means you are just learning—and not failing. The more people realize the difference the better. Each time you fight through adversity you learn something about yourself, get stronger in some, or many, aspects and end up developing even more as a person.

In every venture I have started, I have had an all-in mentality. It's the only way to do it. A half-in mentality won't build anything and it only shows that you aren't fully committed. That's a surefire way to total failure. I was prepared to fail with every venture I have tried. In my mind, I knew that I would have small failures along the way or lose some battles, but that the war, in the end, would be won. There would never be total failure. I simply made sure that was not an option, no matter how many minor battles there may be along the way. This mentality is more like a marathon and not a sprint.

The great Thomas Edison said he failed 10,000 times before the 10,001st time became the invention of the light bulb, which changed history

forever. He said he had 10,000 ways not to do it but he found the one way to do it that completely changed the game. What if he would have stopped after 9,000 and called it a day? He made sure failure wasn't an option and his driving force was so strong he didn't stop until he met his goal.

I would advise you to resign to the fact right now that not everything is going to work and that's okay. Things not going as planned is something that is bound to happen, but the way you react is the key and the true test of your passion. If you react like your dog died every time something doesn't go your way then you, my friend, might not be made out to do your own thing. The learned skill of trying to be the master of your emotions and stay at a medium-level and even-keeled is key. It's all about having perspective and staying focused on your goal. **When something doesn't go as planned, you adjust your plan and keep moving forward.** Believe me, I have had to do this many times over the years! Please don't waste your time sulking about what didn't go right. When you spend your time like this, you are not going to get any closer to achieving what you want to achieve. It's merely a distraction. Don't give in and give up just because something got in your way.

Think about this: you can be a hall-of-famer in baseball if you just go three out of 10 your whole career at the plate. Three out of 10 doesn't seem that hard, right? That's it! A career .300-.320 hitter doesn't get upset every time he strikes out or flies out; it's a percentage game. They think, "I will get them next time because I'll adjust". They believe in their abilities and are strong enough to overcome the minor roadblocks.

You need to have high expectations for yourself and strive to meet these. However, sometimes you will fall short. It's inevitable. When this happens, you need to learn from it and continue to reach for those expectations next time. This is the mindset you need to have in order to be successful. You

never quit, you never give in. The 'learning from your failures' part is vital to accomplishing your dreams. You need to ask yourself, "what went wrong and what could I have done better? How can I educate myself to fix it?"

On the other hand, if you're afraid to fail, and you just overanalyze, you will never even try. You will not learn these vital lessons. Basically, you're sitting on the sidelines waiting for the perfect chance that will never come. You may think you're going on a certain path, but stuff can change in the blink of an eye. Business changes daily and doing well, adapting, and pushing through is key. Believe me when I tell you this: there is no such thing as a perfect chance. No matter what you do, there will always be risks, but if you focus on your daily vision then you can be victorious.

I've found that most times when you hit a twist or a turn, the things that you learn in that failure process will harden you up and make you sharper when it's time to be big and go for it again. The things that I went through that were very difficult made me harden up, so when it was time to deal with all those zeros in business I would be ready. The fact that you could fail at anything is what makes it worth doing. It's NOT a failure when you fall short AND learn a lot from it to better yourself. You only fail if it didn't work and you just quit altogether. The plan always has to be that if something isn't working, then you adapt and change but you still keep going and pushing forward toward your goal.

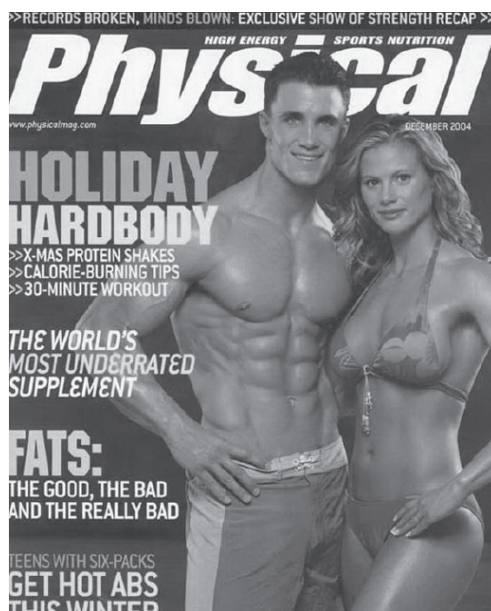
My grandpa is almost 90 years old and is having some health problems here and there. Every day he says, "I'm not a quitter." He doesn't give in and sit around just because he has some aches and pains. He still has a high quality of life. He goes to the coffee shop in town and meets up with his friends, he works out 3 days a week, and he still enjoys hitting golf balls. I always tell him I know that he's not a quitter and he is the last guy I am worried about quitting. He is from, what is deemed, the greatest generation.

The WW2 vets and post-great depression generation. This man knows how to push through and has taught me the same. You should remember what he said, live by it, and “don’t be a quitter.”

Epic Fail: Going To a Photo Shoot With No Muscle!

I got a call about a month before Thanksgiving to book my first-ever magazine cover. It was a direct call from the editor. I had met him at the Arnold Sports Festival (a massive fitness weekend extravaganza held by Arnold Schwarzenegger each year in Columbus) by going around to booths and handing out my pictures, once again trying to live the dream. It worked! They booked me with no agent, except for one major issue: I wasn’t in tip-top shape. It was fall, and I was doing some powerlifting at the time and I was not model ready. I busted my ass for one month; I even had turkey salad at Thanksgiving. This is what was going through my head: I need to try my best to make this work even though the situation wasn’t optimal. I believed it was one of the best shots I had to reach my goal of being on a magazine cover.

I couldn’t believe it was happening. This was playing right into my plan of attracting a supplement



I was super-motivated about living my dream. I was going to California where all the bodybuilders lived and shooting the cover for GNC’s magazine!

sponsor. The magazine I was shooting for would be on display at GNC right at the check-out counter for a whole month. I said good-bye to my family. I start telling everyone, including all my friends, that I was going to be on a magazine cover. It's a wrap. I landed at LAX, never having been to California, so I was excited. I had never flown cross-country for a shoot! It was definitely a surreal feeling, but I was about to learn a valuable lesson very early in my fitness career.

For those of you who don't know: when you are lean, the cabin pressure on an airplane can make you retain water and look completely different within just a few hours. Epic fail #1: I knew nothing about it at that point early in my career and I probably wasn't going through the best process to prevent this from happening. I landed and went to the set. I walked in and saw Greg Plitt shooting a cover with a girl. They had booked us both. This was before Greg had 100 covers and was a huge success. These were his early days. However, he still looked ridiculous.

I was thinking "damn!" I have two hours before it is my turn. That's a long time to wait, so I had the idea to leave and go do one hour of cardio at the local Gold's gym in Hollywood. I believed this would help me look more ripped. However, that was not the case. This was epic fail #2: flying makes you retain water and cardio makes you lose it, and my skin started to swell from the confusion. I was sweating, but my body was holding onto it. I didn't look as tight.

Epic fail #3: I wanted to go in with a base tan and started tanning. I ended up getting burnt from the tanning bed the night before my trip, which also made me retain water. Everything I was doing was making me look worse—and I was going downhill fast! You can see where I am going with this. I took my t-shirt off but still had on my tank top. I was sitting there chatting with Greg and some others. He asked me in a nice way what I was doing

there. I believe he thought I was part of the camera crew. I told him that I was up after him to do my photo shoot. I also told him that it was my first cover. I was pumped about the photo shoot, but Greg's question had me worrying even more that I wasn't ready. I was starting to realize that I looked as soft as a marshmallow, and it was getting worse by the hour. Greg was nice. He said congrats and have fun. I wasn't ready, but he was still cool about it.

I met another great guy that day, Cory Sorensen, a top photographer in the fitness industry. I took my shirt off, and it suddenly became my worst nightmare. I had no cuts. I was waterlogged. It was awful. Cory tried so hard to get the lighting as favorable as possible for me and be nice, but I looked like shit, plain and simple. After about an hour of straight crap photos, I said, "Look, man, this isn't working. I'm soft as crap and embarrassing myself." I honestly thought I was fucked and wouldn't have another opportunity to do a cover shoot. I had thought this was my big break. I know Cory could tell I was crushed because this was supposed to be a huge break for me. Before I left, I asked for Cory's number. I said, "I know you shoot for lots of top fitness magazines and I know I wasn't ready today. If I pay my own way, can you shoot me for some cover tries again, once I can represent myself in a proper fashion?" He said sure man. That was all I needed to spark a wild fire to fix what I just fucked up. I had a setback, but I was determined not to give up. I told him when I fly back, I will be so prepared that I will land a cover. He couldn't wait. He said, "Call me when you are ready."

I worked so hard when I got home to avenge how I messed up. I could have easily quit right then and there and said this is not for me. I fell short of my expectations but I was determined to learn from it and make it better. Instead of sulking, I took action and made my situation better by creating a relationship with Cory and setting up another date to go for the cover shoot again. I didn't fail because I never gave up. I flew back to California a few months later super-ripped and ready to go. The shots I took that day ended

up being my first magazine cover (Fitness and Physique magazine).

It would have been so easy to just give up and quit in defeat. I reacted like my grandpa had taught me. I am not a quitter.



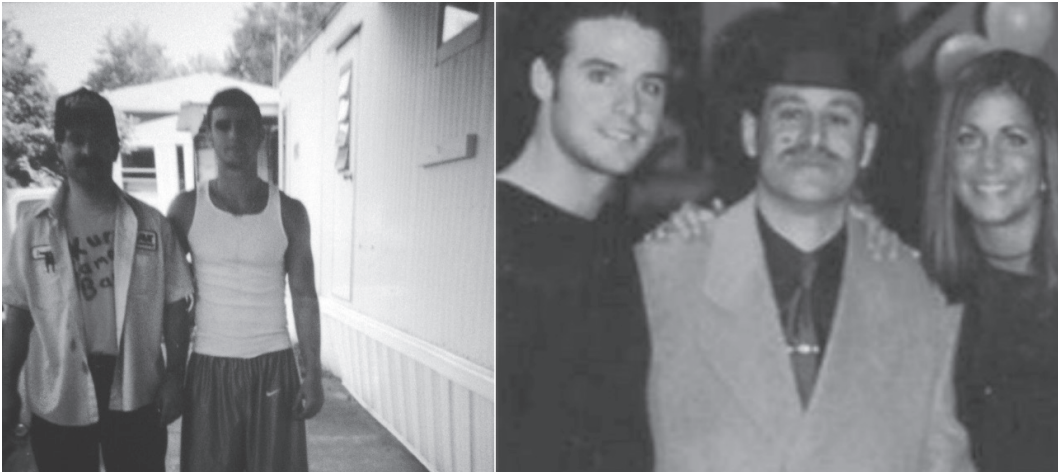
Failure Work Space

Identify 10 things that you believe you have failed at and what you learned from each situation.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

CHAPTER 5

DAILY PERSPECTIVE



David Anthony Gregory RIP

Everyone has times in life and things that happen that make no sense

Nothing is guaranteed, not even tomorrow. I feel like we lose sight of this a lot. I know I do and have over time. Getting up each day with gratitude for what you have and how far you have come is so important. Having that perspective and just being positive is so important and really sets the tone for how you approach your life and your vision. I always have major goals set for myself but never let it get me down if I'm not there yet. I use them as means for motivation to help me strive to be better. A lot of people get down on themselves with daily negative talk and just allow bitterness to control them. Each and every one of us could do that daily if we choose. I say choose to not focus on that negativity, but instead, only focus on the positive things or people you have in your life. Maybe it's family, friends, or a pet. Maybe its an activity you enjoy. Focus on the positive and let the negative thoughts (and sometimes people) go. What are the blessings in your life? What are you grateful for? You will be much happier if you focus on these aspects. I refuse to be bitter in the one precious life I have. Of course, everyone goes through hard times. Things are not always perfect, sometimes they are disastrous. When they are, I try to look at why this is happening to me, what's the reason? I ask myself, "how can I make this into something positive?" This is not always easy to do. I have made some very hard business decisions from time to time, and I always think how can I turn a negative into a positive. How can I look at the glass half full? A lot of people ask me how can you look at your life like that? Isn't that just putting your head in the clouds daily? I say no. I just don't want to look and go through life with a hazy lens of doubt with morbid outcomes. I choose the brighter side and a positive mindset makes life more enjoyable. Everyone has times in life and things that happen that make no sense, that you can't make anything from, and/or figure out why it's

happening or did happen. Take a deep breath and give thanks to whatever you believe in for making sure you got up on this gracious day. I try to get up with the intention to make someone else better today, either from what I teach or from how I am trying to make myself better from what I am learning. I also want to have a positive effect on my family as they grow up to be adults and are molded by me as a father. I have all these things swirling, but it all comes down to daily perspective.

What's a Bad Day really Like?

You get out of bed and stub your toe, lose your car keys so you're late for work. You get to work and you spill coffee on your new shirt plus you forget the report you had for your boss. Someone like me sees you at lunch and says, "Hi, how is your day going?" which I ask people in public all the time. Then your response is that you're having a bad day. I would say normally what are three things you have to be thankful for and people say my kids, my hobby, my dog or whatever the three things may be. I tell them to focus on how important those things are and then I smile and say, "It ain't that bad." I had a very bad day once, and this is a big reason why I am like this.

It was 10 o'clock on a Saturday night. I got a call from my stepmom Bonnie. She said, "Cory, I just got home from work and your dad's not here." I instantly knew something was really wrong. My dad, although a bit goofy, was very regimented person who went to the same places at the same times every day, drove the same route home from work. My father, who was a coal miner for 16 years when I was young, finished his career as a truck driver. He drove every night from Columbus, Ohio, to Pittsburgh and back, staying in Columbus all week. He drove the night shift. On Saturday mornings, when he was done with his shift after driving all night, he then would drive another 2.5 hours home to stay all weekend with his wife Bonnie. My dad did this for

the better part of 10 years. After I got that phone call from Bonnie, I knew he should have been home 12 hours earlier and either he got car-jacked or he fell asleep. I hoped with all my heart I could find him alive and rescue him. I had heard of stories like this. I was trying to be positive but nothing looked good. I picked up my sister, Bettina, and we went looking for him with a flashlight up and down that long windy road, looking over every hill and trying to keep hope alive that we would find Dad. I called my friend who was the chief of police in Franklin County to help us and he called me back a few hours later. They had found my Dads car. He said, "Cory, I don't have any identification from the driver, but whoever was in that car isn't alive. It flipped upside down, and the person was killed instantly." So on September 1, 2007, my Dad fell asleep on the ride home to Bonnie and ran off the windy, country road, Route 22. My heart literally sunk, and, when I went to the scene, which was about 30 minutes away, I was in disbelief. My sister and I drove by him at least four times that night but we never found him. I am so grateful that I didn't find him. There was nothing we could have done if we had, and it would have been awful.

Bettina and I were always off and on with our dad. He taught us good things and bad things about how to be father, but it was getting better. But now it was suddenly so final and over. I often think about the pain and hurt I felt that day. Everyone experiences his or her version of this pain in their life. It's awful. I don't wish it on anyone. In order for me to move forward, I had to try to learn from it and find the positive. What I took from it was to make sure to be thankful for the people in my life. Tell them I love them every day. I also learned that life is quick and you never now when your time will come. Live life without fear and go for



the things you want. Lastly, I realized that even if shit isn't going my way, it's still a good day. I'm alive and I will be fine.

The day my father passed away was a bad day and it was awful. When I think back, I miss my dad a lot, but I know he is looking down on me and proud of me for the difference I have tried to make in people. Keep your head up. It's a great day today. I like to rep his favorite hat a few times a year in tribute to him.

Mark Rine's Daily Perspective

Mark has become one of my very close friends over the past couple years. What you will read below is a story that challenges your mind to think "What if I was faced with a situation like this?" He is an amazing person and he has had a huge effect on my family. I have learned a lot from Mark and I know you will too. The following is Mark's story in his own words.



"Everyone has those moments in life that seem to make time stand still, moments that never lose the original impact. I have encountered many of these moments over the last 3 years.

On Sept 11, 2012, I was walking into a doctor's office at the request of my wife. The whole idea of me being in that place at that time was completely ridiculous to me;

I was in the best shape of my life and in my mind had no reason to seek any medical attention. My wife was concerned with a small spot on my back and decided I needed a medical opinion as to what it was. My wife had no idea that her concern was going to lead to; a whole new way of life was

knocking at our door. After a short conversation with the doctor he asked me to remove my shirt and show him the area of question. The doctor's face told the whole story. He knew with one look this was serious: cancer.

My mind heard every word the doctor was saying but I remember thinking to myself that this wasn't real, there is no way this was real. How can I have cancer? How is this even remotely possible? Leaving the office that day I was trying to decide how am I going to explain this to my wife, how am I going to tell my children that their daddy has cancer. It was at this moment driving down I-70 that I decided no matter what happens I am going to win. To this day I am still surprised that this mindset came to me so fast. With that being said I am not going to tell you that I don't ever have a bad day or dark times during my day. Cancer is a beast and no matter what you do doubt and weakness are always lingering, but a positive mindset can be a very powerful thing. I would soon realize how powerful my mindset could be and how far it could carry me.

Over the next few months I was in and out of major surgeries. Some of these surgeries left me temporarily disabled unable to do even the little things in life. These same surgeries also came with a more detailed diagnosis. The word cancer at this time had become normal conversation at home. But the word terminal was new and unexpected to all of us. My cancer wasn't going away.

Determination is an immeasurable fuel if one truly believes. Even after learning that I had a terminal cancer and the fact that it was not if but when, my mindset got even stronger. I didn't care what procedure, how much radiation, or what chemical hell they were going to put into my body I was not going to let cancer see me weak. Cancer was my opponent and I knew physically it had the advantage, but mentally I was in control.

Every morning I start my day out the same way. I give thanks for the blessing of the day and give thanks to God for granting me another day. This may seem like a very simple exercise but it is a very important one. Many of my mornings are spent diagnosing new and old symptoms. It is very common for me to wake up with new deficits and new pains that are involved with my ever-changing body. As devastating as all this seems I find it to be a source of power, a source of motivation.

Each day comes with a challenge and each day I get to defeat that challenge.

One of life's great misconceptions is that life is easy. I see people on a daily basis asking themselves why is this happening, what did I do to deserve this, why is this so hard? Well let me tell you, life is hard and you have no control of what occurs. The only control you have is how you react. Coming home and sitting in front of my wife and 5 children having to explain to them that the doctors said I have a 5 percent chance of surviving just 5 years was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. The tears in everyone's eyes and the fear in their voices told the whole story, but I knew I had an opportunity to leave my family with an example that they could follow for the rest of their lives. Too many times we as a society get caught waiting for someone else to lead us or guide us in the direction we think we should be going, when in turn we need to be searching ourselves for the passion and drive that we are already equipped with. Establishing and keeping a determined, positive mindset is an absolute must to be successful each day. We all face challenges daily, some small and some large but it is not the challenge that forges the man it's the response that creates the legacy.

“Every morning I start my day out the same way, I give thanks for the blessing of the day and give thanks to God for granting me another day.”

I am often overheard saying that I have taken more from cancer than it will ever take from me. This statement is true in so many ways but most importantly in the fact of the wisdom I have gained from my situation. When facing imminent death you are facing two options: lay down and give up or face it head on and live.

Many aspects of my life have changed since my diagnosis, but I have to say that my daily outlook is what has been the most affected. My wife would tell you that I am a negative thinking person first then a positive thinker but let me explain. I have learned that I must first evaluate an entire situation or obstacle before I can decide how I am going to move forward, whether that first reaction is negative or positive. Regardless of the initial reaction it is the secondary reaction that produces success or failure. Even when negativity is the initial overwhelming emotion involved it is how you use that energy to find the strength to move on. Through my own experience and evaluation of life and how truly fragile it is I have been blessed with an opportunity to focus on the little things that we all take for granted each day. It is this experience that has allowed me to form an opinion on where so many of us go wrong daily. Most people live in a state of reflection or, in other words, regret. Everyday as we walk our path we are constantly looking back into the past, second-guessing decisions, thinking of the would of, could of, feeling shame for a past decision. This mindset is like quicksand. There is no success in living this way. Your focus must always be moving forward. So much more can be learned from the failures or hardships in your life compared to your successes,

but too often we get stuck in that state of negativity, not learning but sinking. I recall sitting in a recliner on the 11th floor of The Martha Morehouse at The James at Ohio State. I was being connected to high dose immunity therapy for the first time. My wife was sitting quietly in a chair opposite me in the room. She was sitting very still, just staring at me as the nurses hooked up multiple lines to my body intravenously and were explaining all the horrible things that they were expecting to occur over the next 4 hours as my body would attempt to take this hellish cocktail in. As the nurses left the room my wife could no longer hold her emotion and just began to sob. My heart was breaking inside and anger was becoming the overwhelming emotion, but it was my newfound mindset that quickly evaluated the situation and allowed me to take this horrible memory and spin it into a new strength that we both could feed off of. It was that quick evaluation, recognizing the negative impact this experience was having on her emotionally and mentally, that allowed me to turn the negative into the positive that it was. I could have cried and focused on all the ugly that we were being surrounded with at that very moment and no one would have blamed us or even said a harsh word, but in turn I got up, embraced her and I told her that cancer may take my body, it may take my strength, it may make me sick, but it will never take my heart nor my love for her. It is this that will carry me over any obstacle that cancer will set in front of me. We have shared many moments like this over the last 3 years and even as the moments never get easier it is the same mindset that carries us through getting stronger with each passing obstacle. Cancer is a coward, a spiritless object seeking to destroy and make weak. Forward thinking focus, determination and a positive mindset are all things that cancer and obstacles in your life do not have. These mental qualities are instilled in all of us but the choice you manufacture and use them daily is only up to you.

I am often asked how am I feeling. It is a question that I hear dozens of times daily. I have a standard response that never changes: "I can't complain."

This response gets many different reactions but the fact is I can't complain. Yes, I have stage 4 cancer that is terminal. Yes, I have a week of chemo therapy every month. Yes, I have pains daily that are unexplainable and very painful, and yes, the thought of dying goes through my mind on a daily basis but that is such a small part of my life. If you are to take anything from all that I have written and said please take this



to heart. no matter how bad life gets or how difficult it may seem choose to focus on the ones you love and remember there is no amount of money that can ever buy you more time. Time is not the enemy, it is what we choose not to do with it that is our enemy. Spend time focusing on what is important and not what is superficial or the problem of the week. Spend time living, living and focusing forward.

A year after my diagnosis I was approached by my brother. He had a vision on how my story could impact the lives of so many other people. I sat and listened to all he had to say and the entire time I kept thinking, "Who in the world is going to care about what I have to say?" I didn't have the heart to tell him I didn't agree with his opinion on how impactful he thought I was. Instead, I told him I would do whatever he wanted me to and we would figure things out together. We started a non-profit foundation called SKNLUV, a foundation designed around pre-diagnosis, the only real cure for cancer. I travel all over the state of Ohio teaching and educating others on the dangers of this deadly disease. It has become my life's mission to reverse the effect

that Melanoma is having on the United States. Melanoma claims a human life every 57 minutes; it is the only cancer with rates that rise yearly and has been doing so for 30 years. My passion is life, my goal is living and my hope is that when I am finished my legacy will reflect both of those. SKNLUV is a phenomenal organization solely focused on the positive effect we can have on other people. It has been through the experience of having a positive effect on others that I have gained so much strength in my life. The renewed energy and motivation I receive after each speaking engagement carries me further than I had ever imagined. Witnessing the impact that SKNLUV is having on communities and individuals is a true testimony to positive thinking and forward focus. Please take the time to visit our site and connect with us, we love to hear from others and their stories of encouragement.”

Daily Perspective

Work Space

What has been the worst day of your life?

What was the best day of your life?

Now you know that no matter what's happening, it is not as bad as #1.
Be thankful for your answer to question #2.

CHAPTER 6

BE RELENTLESS



*2000 Selling programs at the Arnold Classic
to get tickets to the show (BEFORE),
2014 Handing out the winning trophy with Arnold (AFTER)*

I'm knocking on the door. Boom. Boom. Boom. No one is answering

I'm knocking on the door. Boom. Boom. Boom.

No one is answering

If you know your purpose and you knock long enough, somebody is bound to answer the door. I live in Columbus, Ohio, which has advantages being in the fitness industry. I go to the Arnold Schwarzenegger Classic/Sports Festival every year, which is the biggest fitness event on the planet. When I was 20, I got a job selling programs out front in trade for tickets to the night show, along with VIP packages, which was great. The funny thing is years later when I co-founded MusclePharm, I was one of the top three sponsors of the entire event. But back then, I would go to the Arnold Classic, and I would hit up all these companies for a supplement sponsorship. I would always pitch to them that I could be their fitness guy. I can program and write well enough, plus I can speak on camera. But because I didn't have any inside connections, I wasn't on any magazines, and I hadn't won any shows, no one was really feeling me.

But I'm knocking on the door - and knocking as loud as I can. Boom. Boom. Boom. No one is answering. No one believed me. No one is into it. Guess what I said to myself?, "Well, they aren't answering and opening the door so I'm just going to build my own house." It occurred to me that the door I was knocking on was going to make money for somebody else. Instead I decided to build my own and make money for myself. I chose to take a major risk with a friend and we started building our own sports nutrition company called MusclePharm. I became the face of the company because the customer could identify with me since I lived and breathed fitness. I wasn't

just another supplement company executive. I was one that actually lived the life as well. I cared about the customer and focused on providing the highest level of customer care in the industry.

So now all those people whose doors I was knocking on when I was 20 are saying, "Man, we need a guy like Cory in our company. We need somebody to do the things that he's doing at MusclePharm for us. But, the funny thing is that they don't remember that I was there knocking on their door years earlier saying, "Hey, I want to be this guy. I think I can do it."

The point is, if somebody's not going to provide you with the opportunity you want then you will have to just create your own opportunity. YOU go out and create what you want in your life. Don't let one road block (or even 10) stop you from realizing your dream. BE RELENTLESS!!

In chapter 4, I mentioned my first cover shoot, which appeared to be an epic fail. After that shoot, I had four successful shoots where I looked great but they never got published. You would think after the first experience that I would learn to keep my mouth shut to friends and family about when my phantom magazine covers were coming out. However, I wouldn't let my lack of landing a magazine cover get me down. I said, if I'm good enough to shoot for magazines, eventually someone has to put me on the cover. I visualized myself walking up to the newsstands and seeing myself on the cover, ripped to the bone, growing my personal brand in fitness. I would think about how proud my grandpa would be since he was the one who taught me how to lift weights. I would think about the emotion that would run through me as I picked it up. Yeah, I know I was obsessed but that's part of making the most of your vision and dream. Your drive has to be relentless in order to achieve your dream. Stay relentless!

Then one day I got a call from Matt Shepley, saying he was going to use my picture on the cover of Fitness and Physique. I was so excited! When I

went to buy it at Barnes and Noble, all of those exact feelings I had dreamed about happened: I had finally made it a reality. It was so damn cool! The magazine cover business makes you no money; it just gives you some great recognition and awareness in the industry. My goal was accomplished, and I have landed 11 more covers since then. I had been relentless at pursuing my dream of being on a magazine cover and it payed off big time.

The craziest three weeks of my fitness career

Everything about my routine seemed normal that day. My alarm went off at 4 a.m. I was up early to train, and I was set to get after it in the gym as usual. But something didn't feel quite right. My immediate goal—my assignment that day— was to have a great workout in the gym. However, beyond that daily goal, it got a little fuzzy. I didn't have any other goals for the day which really didn't sit well with me.

Since doing a photo shoot for a magazine at the Arnold Classic earlier that year, I had not put together any assigned goals. This was very unusual for me. But, with my day-to-day work and other things getting in the way, it wasn't until that morning that I noticed I had fallen into a rut.

Luckily, I was about to find some motivation in the nick of time. An editor from a large online publication sent me a video feature they were preparing to release regarding my own fitness journey. So, right before I left for the gym, I sat down to watch the video, which delved into my fitness, family and background, as well as my overall mindset in general. It turned out to be a great piece and, even though it was still 4:10 a.m., a light bulb instantly went on in my head.

While watching the video, I realized that I spoke very confidently and clearly in the video (my discipline at the time the video was shot was at an

all-time high). I wondered why that was the case. The reason, though, came to me quickly. We shot the video during the Arnold Classic, when I was representing the company I co-founded, MusclePharm, and it was just three days out from what was the biggest photo shoot of my life. Clearly, I had set goals: I was focused, and I was relentless into doing whatever it took to reach them. It was the wake-up call I needed.

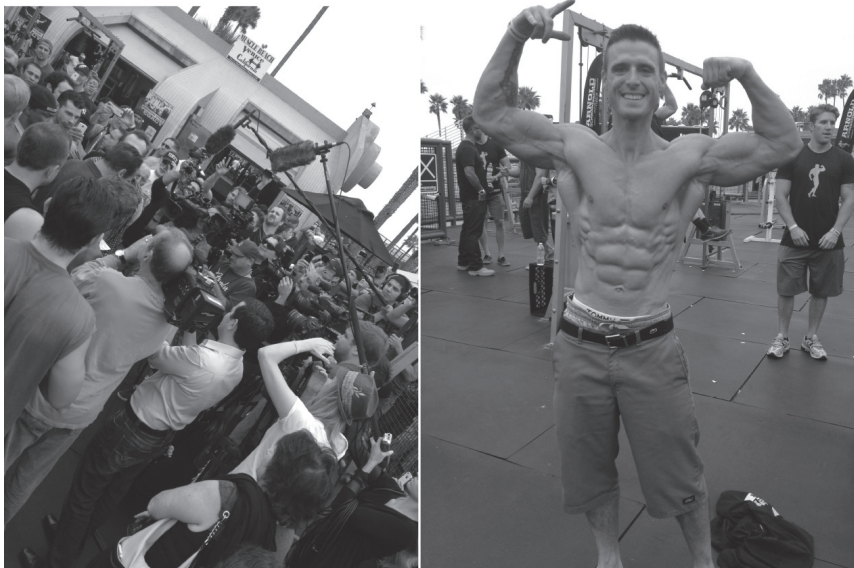
Suddenly, I wanted that Cory back, and I realized that I had strayed from an ultra-focused, goal-oriented mindset. I wanted my confidence at that level every day, and I was starting that morning. From then on, I decided I was going to treat every day like it was the day before a competition or photo shoot. I decided I was going to be fit for anything and be ready for any challenge. This approach paid off. It took a lot of hard work and discipline, but, just a few months later, it paid off in a major way, as I experienced the craziest three weeks of my fitness life.

I put together a list of new goals, which included a cover shoot in Canada and another one in Las Vegas just two weeks later. But my goals weren't just physique goals; they also included some major business ones that changed the entire shape of MusclePharm and the industry. We had just recently signed Arnold Schwarzenegger, and I was determined and eager to launch our Arnold Series Line with all the fanfare it deserved.



During this time, I was also set to turn 35, which brought up an old goal: being ripped for my 35th birthday. I wasn't going to backslide this close to it. To get there, I knew I needed the perfect training split and nutrition plan to

make this work. Luckily, the ultimate test of all of these goals came together in a rapid fashion, which really put me to the test. It was the ultimate challenge to accomplish all of these and see how locked in I was, but I was determined to make it happen. I was relentless.

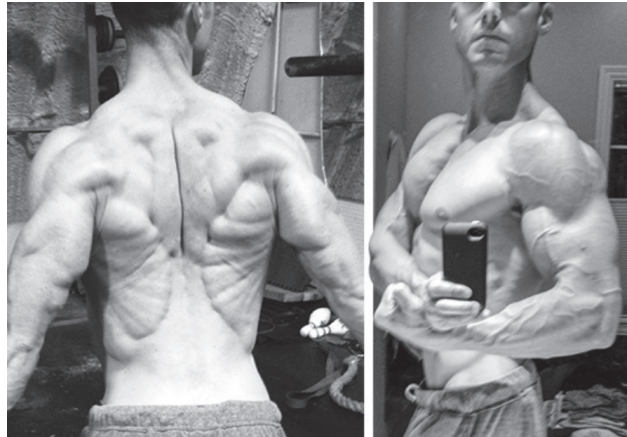


The first shoot in Canada happened on September 16 and went well. My birthday was the next day, and, with the photo shoot the previous day, I was in great shape. I celebrated by eating one sliver of pumpkin pie (my favorite), but after that it was right back to work. My next photo shoot was two days later in California, and we had the Arnold Series to launch.

On September 18, we launched the Arnold Series Line with a massive party at Venice Beach (I'm still amazed how well it went off). After that I jumped right in to my next photo shoot. But I wasn't done yet. I went straight to Vegas for the Mr. Olympia Expo, and, because I was still in great shape

(a result of being relentless and attacking my goals for months), I ended up shooting three more covers.

My goals during that period of time were clear and focused. That made all the difference and allowed me to be calm throughout all the craziness. I knew what I was going to achieve. Because my goals were clear and focused, my diet and training reflected that. However my three weeks of craziness still had one final dose. My longtime friend Nick Showman called me and said, "Hey Cory, you know the Natural Ohio Bodybuilding Association show is on October 12. What are you looking like?"



Stay relentless! Thirty days, four covers, one bodybuilding show, and launch of the Arnold line!

I hung up and immediately started to wonder. I had not been on a bodybuilding stage in five years, but maybe this was the final challenge for this time span that I needed. I was still motivated and I had just witnessed all of the excitement around bodybuilding from hanging with Arnold and being at the Olympia Weekend. Nick's show was just two miles from my house, and my family could attend, which meant only one thing: I was all in!

I weighed 173 pounds a little less than a month out, and I wondered what I would look like at 165 pounds. I wouldn't be massive, but I doubted anyone could be as lean. So I had one last goal to be relentless about: get crazy peeled like I had never been before.

I was in a great position to get there. This was the first time all three of my children could experience me being on stage, so I wanted to make them proud. In the end, I finished second overall at the bodybuilding show, capping off an incredible three-week run and easily the most productive three weeks of my life as an athlete.

I ended up with four covers, another huge spread in a magazine, launched the Arnold Series and competed in a bodybuilding show, all because I set goals and got down to business. Amazing things can happen when you are relentless with true, defined, and clear goals. It only took three weeks of craziness for me to realize that once again. What are you waiting for?



Be Relentless

Work Space

Identify five things you may have given up on too soon and didn't try hard enough at.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Out of those 5 things, choose the top three you need to pursue again to help with your mission.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

CHAPTER 7

BE A GAMER: SEIZE THE DAY



How I got Arnold to be our business partner

The title of this chapter says it all. Be A Gamer: Seize the Day. It is how people can go from good to great in my opinion. I preach this to my son all the time. My son recently did a pitch, hit, and run contest for baseball. He said, "Dad, I'm a little nervous." I said to him, "Well , Alex, Gregory's show up when it's game time." That's what I teach. "You get first, you get second, I really don't care what place you get. But when you are there, I expect you to perform your best. You get there; it's your time to shine." I want to teach him that from a young age. I want him to think it is just how we do things. We seize the day and give our best.

When it is your turn to be on stage, you are a gamer. You seize the day and any opportunity that comes your way. That is what you bring. You bring your 'A' game. 1000%. Nothing else. It is about displaying confidence in yourself. It is a mindset to get the full potential out of the situation. I see people crack all the time and it happens to us all, but learning how to go in and deliver under pressure is an extremely important and valuable lesson to carry over into every aspect of your life. I wish I learned it earlier in life or sports. Give me the microphone or the ball when it counts. I know I can depend on myself so I'll bet on me any day. It is the mentality not to depend on anyone else but you in key, life changing situations, that can truly separate you.

These moments, the ones that are so much bigger than others, will show themselves every now and again, and it is all how you react, perform, and deliver. I read a book from the great golfer, Gary Player, and he talked about delivering under pressure and just having gratitude for even being in the situation. The key point I got from that was to downplay it in your own head. In his mind, he didn't get too crazy and he didn't make it so serious. That is the golfing mentality because the game is all mental. On that level, everyone

has serious skills, but it comes down to how you mentally accept challenges and how you perform in those situations. I like to say frankly, “Do you have the balls to make this happen and lock down the deal?” For me, I actually thrive on these instances and I’m going to tell you why and how you can develop a similar mindset.

About a year before partnering with Arnold for the supplement line, I made the most of the literally 15 seconds I had with him at a book signing. Arnold launched the book, *Total Recall*, and I saw he was having a signing at nearby Easton Town Center, a mall in Columbus. I went up and waited in line for 2.5 hours just to get the book signed. There were a lot of people, myself, and my buddy, Jason Daniel standing in line patiently. Arnold was about 2 hours late but when he finally arrived the line started moving pretty fast. It was finally my turn to get my book



signed. Arnold was signing my book without even looking up at me and I said, “Arnold I am one of your vendors at the Arnold Classic. You have been a big influence on me. My supplement business will do \$70 million in revenue this year.” This statement got him to look up at me. He was shocked, as you can see from the picture. I told him my supplement business was called Musclepharm and I hoped to see him at The Classic in a couple months. He said, “very impressive and have a great day.”

A couple months later I hit up a guy named Zach Even Esh, who is a writer on Schwarzenegger.com. I didn’t know Zach personally but he has a successful online business so I knew who he was. I messaged Zach on Twitter

and asked him how he became a writer on Arnold's website and how did he get appointed to Arnold's fitness advisory board? Zach, being a great guy, said connect with some guy they call Ketch, which I later found out meant Daniel Ketchell. Daniel eluded me for a bit, but like the rest of things in my life, I was relentless and stayed on him. I eventually wrote an article called, Golden Era Intensity. It's a nice throwback to the Golden Era of lifting and you may learn a thing or two about intensity along the way if you read it. Here it is:

"When you think about the golden age of bodybuilding, there was always something special about it. The mystique, the enthusiasm, the motivation from a group of guys who took the sport to new heights; it was all there and, like so many others, it was these incredible icons who inspired my own journey into the fitness game.

You know the guys I'm talking about - Arnold, Franco, Frank Zane and so on - and what they did was take the sport to unprecedented heights.

But what made them special to me are some remarkable characteristics that continue to motivate me and stay engrained in my own style of training.

Behind all the awards, recognition and publicity was an unbelievable intensity and work ethic that remains unmatched in today's bodybuilding world.

From that, guys like Arnold and Frank Zane developed this remarkable aesthetic look that is as striking today as it was when they were toiling away at Gold's Gym in the 1970s.

Arnold and his crew developed some impressive variety in their workouts, busting away on supersets of chest and back, annihilating the body with crazy amounts of volume. But that tunnel-vision intensity built results and it built champions, and I truly believe everyone could learn a great deal from the intensity these icons displayed in their workouts.

That has always stayed with me and I've tried to carry out that same crazy, out-of-the-box format in my daily training. I'm always trying to challenge my body to change, grow and evolve, and that's on a daily basis. I think we can learn a great deal from these golden-age legends in that regard.

That stone-cold intensity is imperative to taking your body to new heights, and everyone must find that special level before they completely understand what it takes to make transformations to their body.

Finding the same intensity that Arnold had may not happen, but you can certainly do everything in your power to try to get there. One way to do that is to get a little wild in your workouts – add some volume, get intense and wail away on a body part or two.

There's too many people who seem to be too closed-minded these days about rep counts and rest periods, and more concerned about overtraining.

Believe me, if you think you're overtraining, you're probably not, so don't make that an excuse. Instead, throw in some variety, train your ass off and leave everything in the gym. If you're using proper nutrition and adding in the right supplements, the rewards will come.

The important thing is keeping an open mind to things like rep ranges, cadences and new ways to grow.

Those golden-age bodybuilders did just that, reaching an intensity level that demanded results. More results and more variety also means more fun, and more fun means a more motivated you, and a more motivated you means faster results.

That, my friends, is one awesome circle of progress.

So, dial up your inner Arnold, get your intensity going and make some crazy things happen.

And if you need some help finding some outside-the-box workouts, just look at my Twitter page: You'll see plenty of golden-age era examples there and plenty of chances to summon your inner Arnold."



The reason I put the article in here is because I wanted you to read exactly what Arnold read that let him know that I know the era he revolutionized and what it meant to me. Once I wrote this and submitted it to Ketchell he actually sent it to Arnold. He liked it so much it ran on the front of Arnold's site during the actual Arnold Classic weekend, which was a pretty big deal overall. It gave great exposure for myself and the company on the biggest fitness weekend of the year.

So fast forward and it's Friday at the Arnold Classic. If you've never been there, believe me when I tell you it's about 100,000 people jammed into the moderately-sized convention center in downtown Columbus. It is just super jammed packed and it seems like the entire fitness industry resides here for the weekend. One of my guys that worked for me comes over to tell me that someone is here to see me and they have a bodyguard. I looked over and I had no clue who it was. I had never actually seen a picture of Arnold's son, Patrick, before but here he was in our booth. Initially I was like, "Why is Arnold's son coming to see me specifically?" I was surprised.

Above is the actual picture we took. He said, "Cory, my dad told me to come meet you. He really liked the article you wrote for the site. He

said when he stops by tomorrow he wants to speak with you about it." I have to be honest I was shocked. This is what the power of unique content creation and seizing an opportunity can do for your career. People like Arnold are extremely busy, but a book or an article can travel with them anywhere. This is



how I made my impact on Arnold he got to know me a little. So after I got to speak with Patrick for a while, which was super cool, he left and I started to prepare for Arnold stopping by the next day.

The next day there was a rush happening around the booth and at this event, or really any event Arnold is at, it might even be busier than if the president came by. People go crazy over Arnold all over the world. The above picture is when Arnold stopped by to see me to let me know how much he enjoyed my article. It was a surreal moment, but I told him thanks and I appreciate the kind words. I made sure to reiterate how he had been a big influence on me. He dipped off with his entourage but I accomplished what I needed. I made a personal impression on my idol and soon to be business partner. Now you know the backstory of how I got to at least be recognized by Arnold over the past two years. My opportunity had been right in front of me and you can be damn sure that I seized it and made the most of it.



THE Arnold meeting

One of Arnold's friends that liked MusclePharm, spoke with Arnold about possibly setting up a meeting with us to talk business. He agreed to meet with us a week later. As I approached the office of Arnold's, Oak Productions

I saw a very normal front desk area. However, there was something that was a little different on the wall. There was a mural of the terminator with a machine gun painted on the entire wall. I definitely knew that I was in the right place. I get to the top of the elevators, and all I see is the governor's decal on the door; once again it shows Arnold's dominance over life. I walk through those doors, and an onslaught of movie memorabilia greets me. Everything from life-size terminators and the predator, to pictures with presidents.

In the back of the room I can see every trophy he won as a bodybuilder. It was unreal. I'm thinking, "this is really happening. I get a shot to make a pitch to Arnold Schwarzenegger!" I'm waiting in the office for around 20 minutes with some of my business partners when the time arrives. Arnold strolls in and says hello. There he is, in person; a real human being; this larger-than-life figure I have looked up to for years and I'm here to have a business meeting with him! In that moment, I knew if I brought my 'A' game and seized the day that this could change the way people look at my business and myself forever.

First, let's turn back the clock a few hours to that morning at breakfast. I had a very weird calm feeling about me. I knew it was a time I had waited my

whole life for. This opportunity. I made up my mind to seize it. I knew it to my core that this was the GOAT. He is the MJ to my industry, and I want to learn from him. I wanted to create a business and personal relationship with my idol and I was confident I could make it happen.



Arnold sat down and very simply said he will be shooting movies of and on all year. He then remarked, "I'm doing great and have always wanted to do a sports nutrition line, but why now and why with you guys?" He just sat back and waited. I looked around, and no one said anything immediately, so I figure fuck it, I'll seize this opportunity. I started with the common dominator for both of us: training. I said, "Arnold, it's about education and bringing back all the techniques and intensity of the golden era of bodybuilding. I'm tired of watching kids on their cell phones who don't even know what super-setting is. I want to teach them how to train, eat, and take supplements so they can be better athletes." Arnold said, "I like that, so how would you do that?" Brad, my business partner at the time, had a full marketing deck which laid out the whole thing from products to media and where and how much we would sell in the first year. I spoke about the education and letting Arnold know he could trust us with his likeness; that I understood it at a high level because I had studied it for so many years.

Halfway through the meeting, one of the investors threw a magazine at Arnold. The stars had somewhat aligned for me at that point. I just happened to be on the cover of that magazine, Fitness RX, with all three of my kids that month.



I was in shape, but it was a rare opportunity to have my family showcased and utilized in such a huge meeting pretty much on accident—or was it? I believe that in life, we draw things to us subconsciously, and I really think I was supposed to be around Arnold. It almost felt predetermined. The stars had aligned business-wise. The prep for that Fitness RX shoot in particular was difficult, I remember. But in that moment when Arnold said, “This cover is really great with your kids.” It was all worth it. Arnold then proceeded to look at the whole spread that we shot at the Old School Gym— my

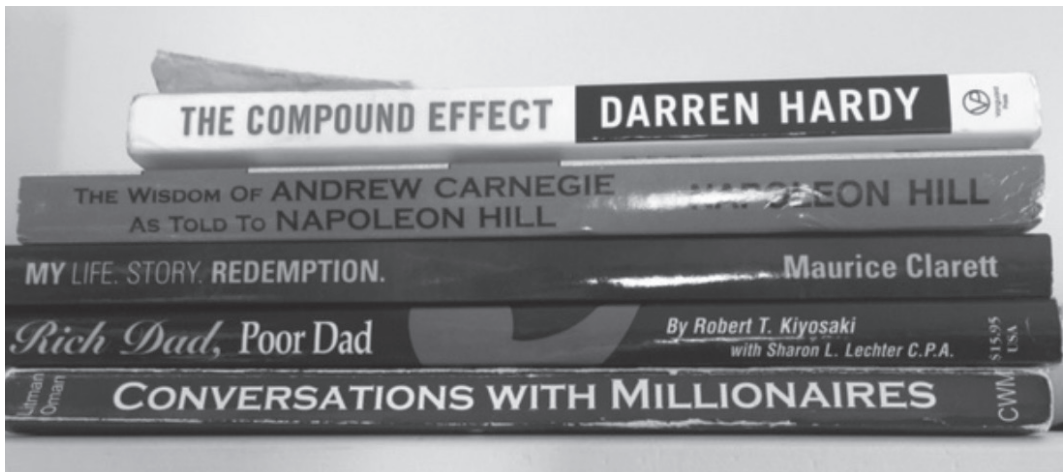
1970’s style bodybuilding gym I own with Dustin Myers in Pataskala, Ohio. He saw that I wasn’t bullshitting him. I live the life. I keep it old school. I’m in shape. He understood what it takes discipline-wise to be at this level, and he respected it.

I looked around at the other guys and when I looked back, Arnold had a poster of me pulled out that featured my abs routine. He said, “Your abs remind me a little of Frank Zane, who is one of my favorite bodybuilders of all time.” I felt like my brain had melted and had come out of my nose! As I was trying to hold it together, I could feel that my mental outlook or business would never be the same after this meeting. We walked out of the room very confident on how it went, and 20 minutes later we get a phone call that told us Arnold is in. It was a feeling of jubilation. I had made a personal impression on my idol and an icon in the industry and he wanted to be my business partner. SEIZE THE DAY!



CHAPTER 8

SELF-EDUCATION



“I realized I have to train my mind as much as I train my body if I want to be successful.”

I make a point to read and learn daily. However, I do need to start off by saying I probably didn't read one book for any class I had in high school. I had zero interest. I really think because of how I am and how I am wired that the subjects just didn't move the needle for me, so I found it hard to be engaged. But I did read one book in high school outside of class. It was a basketball book about Michigan basketball's famed freshman class led by Chris Webber and Jalen Rose, and it was really good. Obviously, the impact this group had in sports was incredible and they had a big influence on me at that time. This book helped my style and confidence as a player, but academically it didn't do much.

Now that you know that I am not an Ivy League scholar, you may ask, “How did I learn my trade?” I am self-taught. Through reading, learning, and here comes the moneymaker—by applying what I learned, I taught myself. This is the main key: You have to take action and see first-hand if stuff works or not. Trial and error. That's usually the step that is most-often missed, skipped, or not even attempted.

I did go to school for one year at Columbus State and I managed to receive my exercise specialist certification. I was in the first class through this new program, so they were building a lot out on the fly but they had a great staff who helped me a lot. People tend to look down on community college and I am not sure why. I spent way less money and got right to my interest without taking a bunch of classes that I wasn't interested in. Columbus State also placed me in a position to learn from the person who taught me my trade of personal training, Reggie Young.

I pretty much learned on my own and from being around mentors and people already in the profession. I also started to read, often finding new unofficial mentors by reading certain book series. I have an entire library at my house of impactful books and I often find myself going back through and re-reading. If you knew me as a young kid, you would never have guessed that I would be re-reading books, but now that I'm older, I can't learn enough. I used to essentially hate reading because I felt it was a waste of time. I didn't value education at all really. I think it is mostly because my attention span doesn't last long especially if I am being made to do something I am not interested in. I check out quickly. No one ever told me, "Hey Cory, go buy a book on exercise and nutrition." That would have been a game changer. Instead, muscle mags were my books for all those younger years.

After I started my business at age 20, I realized that I had to continue to make myself better on my own. As we discussed earlier, if you're up early, you can make time. Fifteen to 20 minutes a day is all it takes, which compounds over time. You can get an amazing amount of material in over the course of a week, month, and a year's time. There's no excuse. You can listen to it in your car on audio files. You can buy books at half price or through Amazon, cheap and used. You can put them on your headphones at work or while you're walking in the morning. I listen to books on my headphones when I do my walking lunges almost every morning for 15 to 30 minutes. While I am lunging, I am also learning. This is why I deemed it my "Lunge and Learn" program.

YouTube studying is also a great way to learn and it's free, as long as you have the Internet. I will go on YouTube, throw on my headphones, and listen to books on tape all the time. As I mentioned above, my walking lunges for 400 to 1600 meters straight give me a lot of time to learn. I put my headphones on and simply listen to the likes of Napoleon Hill, or one of the 15 podcasts I have on my phone. All of them are beneficial and I can learn a

ton from each guest. So what I'm saying is you just have to make a point to do it. Daily development is what made me a more confident businessman and it's a surefire way to ensure you are getting better in some aspect of your life every day. I can't emphasize enough how important that is. I read and admire businessmen such as Andrew Carnegie, James Rockefeller, and the new age guys such as Tim Ferris. I am always in a search for daily development and a chance to get better in some way, shape or form. You should be as well.

What Made Me Want To read?

My friend Mark Evans gave me a book in 2000 called Conversations with Millionaires written by my now friend, Mike Litman. This was a perfect read for me. Mike had interviewed some of the most successful people in business for each chapter. He organized them into them into an easy-to-read, impactful book and I totally consumed all of it.



These books have helped me take action in my own life and had some part in The Mindset Manual indirectly

I didn't realize it at the time, but I was getting a preview of a bunch of authors and I could then read more material from them if I liked their style. I wrote some of my thoughts on three books below that can have a dramatic impact on your life, and I recommend reading these (after this one, of course). I want to teach and have people take action into their lives immediately. These books have helped me take action in my own life and have had

some indirect part in me writing, *The Mindset Manual*. These books are all books like this one, which you can go back to from time to time, re-read and constantly learn something. I call them go-to books—if you are in a rut or working through something you can always go back and read a chapter or two to sharpen up.

Rich Dad Poor Dad

I stumbled upon the chapter with Robert Kiyosaki while reading *Conversations with Millionaires*. Robert wrote a blockbuster bestseller called *Rich Dad Poor Dad*. The title may not sound appealing, but once you realize the content, you'll want to read it. He teaches two ways of living: his rich dad was his friend's dad who owned a business; his poor dad was his actual dad. His real dad wasn't poor; he had a great job making over 100k per year as an employee. The basis of the book is that there are two ways of thinking and two different actions taken daily. One that will make you poor and one that will make you wealthy. I learned more about how to navigate through my financial life in this book than I did in four years of high school. The fire was lit, and I was already using some of Kiyosaki's techniques in my life as I strived to learn more. This was done so that one day could teach my family and my kids how to be wealthy.

The Wisdom of Andrew Carnegie

A few years later, I stumbled upon a book about Andrew Carnegie, which is a name I grew up seeing everywhere in Pittsburgh, which is close to my hometown. This is another book that has molded me by simply teaching lessons from the early 1900s that can still be applied today. It's funny how real concepts can stand the test of time. I know this book will be read 100 years after I publish it, and it will still make sense. Andrew Carnegie is one of the founding industrial fathers of this country. He was a poor Scottish boy when he came to this country and became one of the richest men in U.S. history.



Andrew had a set of principles for business and life that molded me and helped me to write this book.

Andrew was a steel tycoon and helped build America at the height of the steel boom. What I love most is that he was a real teacher who wanted to spread his knowledge through the help of Napoleon Hill. He made it his duty to share with everyone and, almost 100 years later, we are still writing about him. He is truly a one of kind person in history. Andrew had a set of principles for business and life that molded me and helped me to write this book. I would say most of the material is never outdated. Some is of course, but this book spoke to me on several levels. I could always

refer back to it just like you will be able to do with this one. If I get in a funk, I read Carnegie. This isn't a book that you only read once and then you are done with it. I read it often to stay in the game. I would add it to your library. It will make a huge difference.

Compound Effect: Darren Hardy

This book, which I have read very recently, reconfirmed what I already know about being consistent. Like I have said before, "I don't do anything special, I just don't fucking miss." The money is not in doing something extra-special each day; it's about being ultra-consistent and productive for long periods of time. Like I said before, if I get up three hours before you and

be productive for 10 years straight, then I will log over 10,000 more hours toward my goal than you. It's the consistent drive compounded over time that can make you great, which is what this book re-confirms.

The Mind of Maurice Clarett

This book had a big impact because I know Maurice personally. He was on top of the world as the best college football player on the planet and was a national champion with Ohio State. His well-documented story from the documentary series, "30 for 30: Youngstown Boys" shed light on Maurice's rise and fall. He has since rebuilt his life and put the pieces in motion to no doubt become a self-made millionaire. This book is his blog from when he was in prison and had everything stripped from him: His family, his daughter, his passion. It contains some very pure thoughts from Maurice and is as real as it gets about life.



Read and Learn Work Space

Identify three subjects you want to learn more about for your goals.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Identify three books that will help you educate yourself in these subjects.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Set aside an exact time each day and commit to read. What time will you read each day? Minimum 20 minutes per day

CHAPTER 9

URGENCY - HOW I STARTED MY GYM AT AGE 20



The original T3 Personal Training Studio I started when I was 20.'

Transitional Training Techniques

T3 personal Training Studio Gym #1

What are you waiting for? The time will never be just right. If you're waiting for the perfect time for something to happen, rest assured you're going to be waiting the rest of your life. The time is never right but when the opportunity pushes you don't fight it, go for it.

I said, "Fuck it! I'm going to open my own gym!" I was working at a tennis and fitness club personal training while I was paying rent of \$200 per month. This is in late 1999. I was charging \$20 for personal training per session. It's funny because, when I say that, people can't believe I worked for \$20 an hour personal training. What they don't realize is that I was only one year removed from shoveling coal for \$14 per hour and \$21 per hour with overtime. I figured I'd be okay in life; it's all about progress, and, to me, that was huge progress. I had built up to around 20 clients, and everything was moving along nicely with my profession. I honestly felt a sense of accomplishment already at this level. I went from thinking about how I could make money in fitness to actually doing it pretty fast. I had to work my ass off but I had realized there was a major opportunity to make money in the fitness profession doing what I enjoyed. I also realized this is where I want to be. It's my passion and I was all in. That's one of the major keys to this chapter. My definition of being all in means nothing stops you from your goals and failure isn't an option. To me, there is always a solution to the obstacle.

I then made a decision that changed my life and career forever. I decided to apply for the manager position of this small club because I was always there anyway. I was basically running the club at this point anyways while they were looking for a person to fill the manager position. I thought that if I could be 20 years old and the manager of a club plus train people it

would be awesome. That would have been great, but I didn't get the job. I am so glad that I didn't because if they would have hired me it might have dramatically changed my drive to get out of there and open my own facility.

The tennis club management passed me over for the manager position and hired a total goofball who knew nothing about fitness. One thing I always have lived by is living the job and looking the part. If you don't I can't take you seriously. He came in shooting off his mouth about how he was changing things and was going to get the business on another level.



How my gym T3 looked 2 years later with some new equipment carpet & paint.

His first order of business was to strong-arm me for a bigger percentage of my profit. He said to me, "You have another month, then we will be taking 30 percent of your training wages." He was so smug when he said it; he thought he had me. He thought he could push this 20-year-old kid into doing what he wanted. But all that did was provide me with the urgency I needed to drive me and lead me to a life-changing decision. Keith, the manager who they hired, didn't know I had a bigger purpose. I wasn't afraid to do my own thing and he underestimated me. Right before the meeting ended, he said, "Next month no more rent; that's how it's going to work. I want that 30 percent." For people who really know me, I have a hard time processing things of this nature; thus, there is a reason why I work for myself.

I looked at him with a death stare, and right then I knew it was time to rally the troops and start my own place.

“I wasn’t afraid to do my own thing, and he underestimated me.”



1st expansion to 2500 square feet from 900.

The funny thing is, I knew the reason he got the job was because they thought they could squeeze me for more money; that’s why they passed me over. There was no way in hell I was going to allow him to execute his plan. I would rather execute my own plan and make him look stupid. That, my friends, is exactly what I did—and it was awesome. I walked out of the meeting pissed, motivated and focused—and with a chip on the shoulder to prove people wrong. I had urgency now to do my own thing. I had amazing motivation. Let’s keep in mind that I’m 20 years old and had no clue what I was doing, but I immediately starting

looking for spots to rent within one to two miles away so I could hopefully keep all my clients and take them with me. It took me two weeks to identify where my first gym/personal training studio would be and it was time for me to take a major risk. The process of finding a space, negotiating for a space, and figuring out how I was going to pay for it was stressful, but also fun. It was all part of the process, finding myself and learning how to deal with adverse situations. You can take all the classes and read all the books, but there has to be a point where you apply and test yourself.

One of the best moments of the entire ordeal was being able to tell him I was leaving. I was set to go on vacation right before the so-called transition of me giving him 30% of my hard-earned dollars. As I'm leaving, the manager says, "When you come back we are on the new deal." I said, "Oh, yeah. I'm opening a gym down the street. I forgot to tell you and all my clients are coming with me." He was shocked and knew I had him. He had no paperwork or non-compete in place. He was screwed. His business plan just walked out the door; his example to draw more trainers. I was his cash cow, and he knew nothing about the business and had no contacts.



The original Old School Gym I bought with longtime friend Dustin Myers . I had both T3 & OSG at the same time for a couple years.

Trying to keep me from leaving, he proceeded to tell me that this is the best place to build a personal training business. He knew this person that failed and that person that failed trying to do the same thing I was attempting to do. They were older and had more experience than me. How did I think that I would be able to do it if they couldn't do it? I said quite simply that I am not any of these people, and failure is not an option for me. I don't hold myself to someone else's standards. That day I walked out, my life as a business owner

truly began. I felt vindicated as I walked out, but it was time to prove myself. This entire situation made me more motivated than ever to make it happen.

I started calling and looking around for empty retail areas. It took me only about a week or two to see a few possibilities. I had a little money left from working in the coal mine, but, like most young people, I had spent it on a car and partying, so I needed to find some more to start my business. I identified a place 1.5 miles away from where I was working—900 square feet, \$600 per month rent. With utilities, I would need close to \$1,000 per month in order to cover my overhead for the gym. The space I was set to rent was a ladder closet in the building, basically. It was used to store supplies for the renovations of the building, and it was located inside a little mini-mall. Few people actually even knew that the strip mall had an inside. There was a beauty salon next door, which helped a little bit with foot traffic. My best option was buy a sign with a big arrow telling people I was in there. To say it wasn't optimal is kind of an understatement, but I had no choice I needed to make it work. I had urgency. It had to work.

My first landlord did his best to try to take advantage of me. I had no clue what I was doing, and he knew that. I chalk a lot of what I went through under him to lessons learned for the future. I signed a three-year lease but he only gave me one-month free up front, and I should have gotten three. In reality, I should have never signed for three years, and he knew that, but he bound me. It's business and I chalk it up as a big learning experience.



Urgency – How I Started My Gym at Age 20

Once I signed that contract, I owed this guy \$600 per month for three years no matter what, which made my mindset simple: I better make some money. He was always difficult to get to fix stuff and, overall, was a piece of work, but that comes with the territory. I managed to pull together some capital of around \$5000 to make this happen. I had a credit card with a \$4,000 limit at 22% interest, which is awful, but I didn't care. I needed money to get going. I also asked my friend Justin, aka Juice, for a \$1,000 loan. He gave me \$900 (I repaid him \$1,200 with a note written on a napkin). My first order of business was to pay three months' rent up front, and I had that first free month so I had a four-month cushion to get my business going. This was a great early strategy for me; it allowed me to build my business and take care of my clients and not worry about the rent. It also had me extremely motivated that I was officially on the clock to make it happen. It was make it or break it.



*The Current Old School Gym Ranked top
10 Most hardcore gym in the U.S 6,000 sf*

I then asked every one of my clients if they had any extra equipment I could buy. Most of them just gifted it to me, which told me a lot about the relationships I had built them. These clients had my back and were there to

support me. They believed in me. I had a treadmill and bike given to me; both were yard-sale quality, but it didn't matter. I paid for one big mirror and a squat rack. I also had some dumbbells and few odds and ends I bought at Dick's Sporting Goods. I didn't start out with anything commercial grade, I only had 20 to 25 people using my equipment a few time per week, and all of my clients were mostly there for weight loss. But it didn't matter. I was living my dream and I was certain this was only the start.

A lot of people think you need high-end equipment to be a great personal trainer—when actually you don't at all. I didn't overthink the situation and I made due with what I had. I didn't overanalyze. I used all my resources and became as creative as possible, which is where a lot of my current craziness comes from. I did run into a really cool barter network along the way, which helped. Bartering is one of the oldest versions of currency trade; it's old school "you roof my house, I'll give you a goat" type stuff. I found a guy who would re-carpet my gym in exchange for training. I also found a guy to redo this and redo that all in exchange for training. I literally utilized my relationships and my skillset to my full advantage to make it work. This wasn't all about money; it was about the willingness to think outside the box and really do whatever it takes to get the ultimate goal accomplished.

Again, these were real-life situations I had to be a part of to really experience, learn from, and benefit. I'd been living out my goal sheet since day one: own my own gym. I was excited about the possibilities. This place might have been small, but it was mine and it was a start. I felt successful and a sense of pride with my family. It was the start of the animal inside me to feel more accomplishments like this. I could feel that driving force brewing inside of me. I said to myself, if I could get this going at age 20, what could I accomplish over the next 10 to 15 years? The moral of this story is that if I laid down and waited for the perfect time, none of this would have happened. I would have branched out eventually but not as soon as I did—and that gave

me a head start as a business owner. I had been in business almost five years by the time most of my friends got out of college. I ended up opening four more gyms after the original T3 Personal Training Studio. As you look at the pictures and the progression of the gyms I've owned, I want you to know one thing: I always waited until I was pushed into the next facility because I had outgrown the previous one. I did my best to make educated decisions about my overhead as I expanded.



MusclePharm Ohio 8,200 sf (left) MusclePharm Denver 35,000 sf (right)

“That day I walked out, my life as business owner truly began.”

I want to finish this chapter up on a key point that I think holds people back consistently and that is procrastination. I could be talking about business or life. Everyone is guilty of this. Everyone. How do you go from where you are to where you want to be? Don't procrastinate or put things off until later; this is the number one dream killer. People who wait on everyone else never get anywhere. If I waited for someone else to do something for me I would have never started my first gym, second gym or MusclePharm. My life would be astronomically different, there's no doubt about that. I controlled my own

destiny by action, believing, and not procrastinating. Often, we procrastinate out of fear of the unknown. Sometimes you just have to jump and figure it out.

I want you to know if you want something for yourself, quit waiting because you'll be waiting forever. I've realized you can count on one person in your life and that is you. Success and living the dream depends on you. I make myself uncomfortable as often as possible, which helps me crush procrastination and attain the confidence to be successful. Most people are afraid, so they put things off; most people are also just downright lazy, so they put things off; and most people just like to talk without action. Action requires getting off your ass, facing fears, and dealing with trials and tribulations. Being uncomfortable is what makes people successful; procrastination does not. The time is now! Why wait? I'm about this life now!

“I make myself uncomfortable as often as possible, which helps me crush procrastination and attain the confidence to be successful.”

Procrastination & Urgency

Work Space

Everyone has the nature to fight doing something they don't want to do. Identify 10 things you are procrastinating on.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

THE MINDSET MANUAL Success Principles and Personal Stories

Out of these, what are the top three that will help you reach your goals now if you get them done?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is the time commitment required to accomplish these tasks you are procrastinating about?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Is there any part of your life that has a sense of urgency? What can you make happen TODAY that will help you resolve this?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

CHAPTER 10

JUST BE YOU

Don't Follow the Norm:
Just Be You and Let it Roll



This picture is getting ready to interview Arnold for the 1st time & my senior prom picture.

I always tell people it takes confidence to wear a Kangol hat.

Don't follow the norm. That's one thing I learned from hanging out with Arnold, which was truly one of the coolest things I've experienced in my business career. Those moments definitely included a lot of pinch-me type situations. So, I go to Arnold's house; he's got cowboy boots on, a skull ring, and a chain wallet. I mean that stuff hasn't been in for a while. But he doesn't care. He just rolls with it because he's Arnold. He's like, this is my style, and I'm Arnold and I'm a boss.

For me, it's important to be myself. I recently had someone ask about my outfit. All I had on that was different was a hoodie. I think I wore the same pants that I had on from earlier that day. They said, why are you dressed like you're in high school? I said, I have gray pants and a hooded sweatshirt. I didn't think about my outfit and try to look 60 before I left the house. I am a fitness guy and it is gym clothes. I didn't overthink my outfit when I left the house. This is what I felt comfortable wearing. This is Cory. This is me. I just do whatever feels natural.



Arnold cleaning his cowboy boots in his Old School Gym t-shirt

What I'm trying to say is, don't be the norm. Just because I'm 36 now doesn't mean my pants should be a little different. I don't even look at that

stuff. I just do whatever's natural to me. So be you. You're unique, so embrace that and embrace what makes you, you.

Most people are going to like the intangible difference that you offer. That's what makes you different. Don't try to conform to everybody else. That isn't fun anyway.

In my opinion, a lot times being a little different shows confidence; people just don't realize it. If you don't mind sticking out a little bit then usually you're comfortable in your own skin. People who have their own style and do their own thing are cool to me. I started really not to care what other people thought during my sophomore year of high school. I started listening to rap music in seventh grade and by ninth grade the hip-hop culture started to mold me. Funny thing is from the way I dressed to the music of 2pac and Biggie; it had an effect on me differently than most. The reason why hip-hop music resonated with me is because, although I wasn't around the crime, my family was always in a financial struggle. I was always dreaming of that dramatic rise to the top that 2pac and Biggie talked about. I say all the time struggle is struggle. No matter what color you are, struggle is struggle and for some reason this made sense to me and I felt motivated from what they both said in the lyrics and the confidence they displayed.

"I was molded by rap music and muscle magazines with a coal miner work ethic. Isn't that a killer mix?"

Herein lies the problem. I was one of about 10 people who liked this music in my high school. I grew up in the middle of rural Ohio, so I started sticking out. It's amazing how music can shape a person, but it's extremely powerful and honestly felt supernatural to me. I liked to dance and enjoyed

this type of music way more than country or rock. My dad always played Motown, so I think that had a lot to do with it also. I got so used to dressing differently—and when I say “different” it’s the norm of baggy basketball shorts, tanks or old school shirts I use to buy from Goodwill. The norm were I grew up was tight jeans, boots, and John Deere shirts. I had no problem with that; it just wasn’t me. I worked with all types of guys over the years and they were very nice to me but in high school, as most know, it’s like a different world. My friends Dustin Myers, Anwaa Martin, Jeremy Ownings, Steve Thomas, and Luke Spencer were my crew in high school. Even today, they all have a unique sense of style and confidence that comes from this. I lived in an area where I stuck out a bit for years, which helped me a lot actually. Once I moved to Columbus, I didn’t stick out at all in the way I dressed. I went out to the nightclubs and around the city. I could tell at that time it was where I needed to be. Fast forward to present day. Those things molded so well that, in the little town I live in, I tend to be, as my wife calls it, a little loud. But I kind of enjoy it. I get up and just go with what feels natural—what is really me. Don’t fight stuff because of what people will say or think. Here is what I really think: if you have time to worry about why I’m wearing a certain outfit, have my hair cut a certain way, or listen to a certain music, then you have too much time on your hands. If you’re in high school reading this, know that you’ll probably talk to about five people total once you graduate that you speak to now. People grow up and move on. I wish someone had told me how much high school is meaningless from the social cliques to some of the bullshit they teach you. As important as certain dramas feel in high school, they really don’t mean shit in life. After graduation, the social meter resets, and the pond is way, way bigger. It’s no longer small and concentrated, it’s wide open. High school is not life or death, which is hard to understand when you are there. Just know that the mean kids don’t matter once you graduate because the game changes. I preach to do well in school because that’s what you need if you want a college degree or need a skill vocationally for a job. I would

love to see a curriculum implemented for real life situations, such as how to balance your checkbook and be a business owner. Just know that you have to educate yourself constantly after high school to be a productive person and stay sharp. If I could go back to this time frame, I would tell myself a few things.

What I Would Tell the High School Cory Now

1. Social cliques are useless. Even though you will have them, it's not how it works once you graduate. It doesn't matter at all; so don't get sucked into any drama. Just know you'll talk to like 1 to 2 percent of the graduating class the rest of your life.
2. Read business or life books for 15 minutes daily
3. Learn from someone locally who is knowledgeable in what your interested in and shadow them throughout your Junior and Senior years for free (think of it as an unpaid internship).
4. Don't shy away from being different; even though I didn't, I would reinforce it.
5. Learn more about olympic weightlifting and powerlifting not just bodybuilding; be more well-rounded.
6. I quit baseball and football after my freshman year to work and just lifts weights. I wish I would have found a way to play sports and work, no matter what it took. It's my only regret of high school actually, but my mind wasn't sharp enough to realize it. I played basketball throughout but missed a lot of great times with my friends because of stopping those two sports I loved.

Quick Story



I pulled up in my money green Mercedes S500 to a local networking meeting when I was 22-23 years old. I was in a weekly group of local professionals to help each other generate business. I had just picked up what was one of my favorite cars on the planet, the S500, which is the big body Mercedes. This car and body style is one of my favorites still today. Quick note: it's actually Floyd Mayweather's favorite too. They ride so nice and it's like a big leather couch. As you can see in the picture it's a cash money green Mercedes, dare I say almost drug dealer-esque. I got this car for only \$12,500; it's a 1993. I bought it in 2003 or 2004. It had 120,000 miles on it and was owned by two 80 year-olds. It was showroom quality and was still worth \$23,000. No one would buy it because of the color. I said I'll buy it, I didn't care, so for \$10,000 under book I was driving a S500. I found the sticker in the glove box and found out they paid \$100,345 for this car brand new. I had 2pac "Picture Me Rolling" playing day one and I never looked back. So I pulled up to this business meeting and one of the other owners pulls up. He

gets out and says, "Wow, that's an S500 and it's super clean." What he said next I never hesitated at all on the answer. "What kind of personal trainer drives and s500?" he asked. I laughed out loud and simply said, "A really good one."

How to deal with being yourself at Work and In Life

Most people's work environments have a lot of people. The constant balance of personalities and egos is never-ending in work and life in general. I'm under scrutiny from time to time with what I do, which, at one time, was very new to me. It takes a while to get used to people saying things about you or judging you, even though they have no idea what you are really like. You can't worry about what other people think because they simply are not you and most often they have their own confidence problems. I've found more often than not that people talking about others come from a place of jealousy or their own insecurities. I wouldn't let someone place limitations on me. I refuse to allow that. If I had let that happen, you would have never been reading this book. When I told people what I wanted to accomplish in my life, they thought I was crazy. It's funny, most people would act like they believe you, even though they are thinking, "Yeah right, man." on my first morning as a coal miner, I was extremely nervous for all kinds of reasons. I got on the elevator to be taken 600 feet down underground to what they call "the bottom". The bottom is where the man buses are. In layman's terms, man buses are like roller coaster cars that can be driven on rails to the job site you are at that day. Now you have some Coal Miner 101.

I stepped on the elevator and it starts instantly. I'm the new guy. This huge ol'timer named Stan Woochie, aka Wooh (who by the way played football for navy in the 1960s, I believe), is just a monster of a guy. Stan says, "Hey, college boy, what do you want to do when you grow up?" I say, "I want to be a personal trainer and own my own gym." He says, "oh, I know what

personal trainers look like. You mean like Richard Simmons?" I say, "Hell no, not like Richard Simmons. Not even close to Richard Simmons. I have a little different vision than that."

But then I added that I also want to own my own gym and be on the cover of magazines. In this little town of Cadiz, Ohio, where my mine was located, most people wouldn't think that the things that I have accomplished were even possible. But I said those things out loud and often. They were verbalized; I wanted them to become real and possible. They were things that were inside me that I wanted to do, and I had a relentless purpose to be successful. I wouldn't take no for an answer. It wasn't an option in my mind and it really didn't matter to me what anyone else thought of my goals. Why? Because I knew what I wanted and these were my goals, not someone else's.

People will always talk when you are making things happen outside the norm. That's just human nature. If you're out in front of the crowd, people are going to be upset that you're motivated and they are not. The reality is that, deep down, they are mad at themselves, so they project that on you in a negative way. It's a classic confidence problem. I do my best to not talk bad about anyone and, if I catch myself, I have an internal talk with myself and say, "Quit being a hater, Cory."

I want you to be the leader who leads by example. That's the key. You're not trying to make anybody feel bad about themselves; you are just focused on progressing yourself. If people want to be lazy, that's on them, so let them be in that negative mindset. I will pay that no attention and that won't affect me in the slightest. I have my path, my dreams and something so minor like that isn't going to stop me. That's the way I look at it and continue to view stuff of this nature. I won't waste time on it. I love to help people and I always say I'm in the people business. I will do anything to help people, especially in their life and fitness goals. I am passionate about turning on light bulbs

and helping people go after their dreams. It's sad but true: letting things roll is a big part of it, so learning how to do this is key. Once the success comes, people talk, and you have to be mentally prepared for the good and the bad.

I have zero tolerance for drama in my life. I mean zero. Absolutely none. If you are drama-filled and you're around me, we are not friends because I have no time for it. It will take up zero part of my day and I won't engage or spend any time around you. It's as simple as that.

I come from an industry where it's all about helping people, so the environment is mostly positive. The negativity is limited and isolated, so scrutiny isn't really a big part of my job. The way I got bigger in my area of personal training was by starting to run bodybuilding events. This separated me from the other personal trainers. I thought to myself, how can I hang up my name in every gym in my town without them realizing I am indirectly advertising my name and personal training services? So I started my own small, drug-tested bodybuilding organization, the ONBF (The Ohio Natural Bodybuilding Federation). It's now called the NOBA and is still doing very well 10 years later. Either way, when I started to show separation, the hate started to happen.

So how do you handle people talking about you that you don't know or really don't understand why they even care? Well, that's a good question. At first, it was very hard for me because I always wanted to help people and create a positive environment, and now all of a sudden I'm faced with negativity. I have always strived to be different and get to the next level, and you have to learn how to deal with it.

The first wave was local hate with the ONBF; the second wave was when MusclePharm started to blow up. I heard so many sideways comments it was unreal and it used to bother me. It wouldn't affect my goals, but I let it eat at me longer than it should. Now I just tune them out, realizing if you truly

strive to take yourself and your business to the next level, negativity comes with it. It's bound to happen and it's human nature. But it will be the demise of your success if you can't handle it. Two things that can take you down are buying into your own hype or buying into what the haters are saying. You got to this level for a reason and you need to stay confident in why you are here. It's like a major sports star who has a bad game and doesn't want to watch SportsCenter the next day or read the paper. I attempt not to even let that doubt or bullshit enter my head. My advice is that it's going to come with success—but block it out. Don't look for it and just let it roll off your back because it does nothing positive for you. I never want to let self-doubt enter my mind for any reason. I would rather fill it with how I am going to be successful.

Be Yourself

Work Space

Name 5 things that are unique about you. How are you different than the norm?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can you use these unique qualities to pursue your goals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

BE YOU! These unique qualities will separate you from the pack.

CHAPTER 11

MENTORSHIP

Finding Multiple Mentors is KEY



With my grandpa Frank Boone

Finding Mentors

A major thing you need in life or in business is a solid mentor to help you along the way. I have kids ask me all the time, "Cory, how do I open my own gym and do personal training?" I always say who in your town is the best personal trainer? Who owns the gym close by? They usually don't know, so I say reach out to them; tell them you want to learn and work for free to shadow them for a few days, weeks, whatever is necessary. I'm a huge believer in the fact that you need to be shown a path to success in any field, even if it's not the one you'll take. I personally don't have a bachelor or master's degree, so why wouldn't I reach out to the people who have that type of information and sponge up their own personal research and knowledge?

I used to go to the old World Gym on Livingston Avenue in Columbus, and I would find the oldest stud bodybuilder (the guy who is 50 and looks unreal) and try to learn from him. I have learned over the years that, if you really go out of the way to ask someone for help then they usually will. Help is the most underrated word. You should use it when you really want to get something accomplished. It's hard to say no to someone who is actually asking for help from you. Mentors can help you through a process; they made mistakes so you don't have to. Take initiative after you find your passion and goals and go after the local professional to learn; then climb the ranks to be the best in the business so you can then teach others.

Mentors and Molders Frank Boone: How To Be a Man

Frank is my grandfather on my mother's side and is my first hero. He is a big construction guy, like 6-foot-2, 245 pounds in his heyday and is still 220 now at 89 years old. Papa, as we call him, always lived by the basic rules of respect and hard work. He was my man/father figure from the sixth grade on. He did the best to steer me in the right direction, as I got older. The best thing

he displayed for me was ultimate consistency with his business for building homes and lifting weights. He lit a fire that has never gone out, and I'll always thank him for that. Frank is a tough WW2 vet who is truly one of a kind. I'm forever indebted to him for showing me the way to fitness. He treats people how he wants to be treated and so do I. He doesn't care how much money you have or what you do for a living; he is the same to everyone. I learned to never quit or give up. He told me just the other day about this health issue he is having, but said, "I'll be fine; I'm not a quitter." He said, "God can keep skipping my name; I still have things to do. I will fight to have a good quality of life; age is just a number." He constantly tells me stories of post great depression and how when his dad died, he became the man of the house at just nine years old. Papa is a great man and I owe a lot to him.

Michelle Thompson: Perseverance

My mother, Michelle, is one of the most selfless hard-working people I have ever known. She never complains and is always there for everyone else. The financial things I saw her struggle with when I was a kid and how much work she put in as a single mom was unreal. Mom always busted her ass; she tried to stay positive and kept pushing forward. She is my biggest fan and is incredibly supportive. I can't thank her enough. She used to work so hard just to pay \$100 a month rent for our trailer. It's crazy to even think about. I love her and wouldn't be half the person I am if it wasn't for her. I just watched time and time again how she battled and never folded or gave in. She always found a way that taught me you are never done. You have to scrape and scrap to get where you need to be and don't let anyone outwork you. Losing or giving up because you are lazy is not an option. I learned this by watching her grind and she is the epitome of a grinder and I will forever be grateful to her for giving that to me. I love you mom.

Randy Thompson: Work Ethic

I was 17 and had been the man of the house after my dad Dave left, when Randy came into my life. He had different ideas of how I should be disciplined so, as a high school senior, you can image how I loved that. Randy, however, was a legit weightlifter and a hard-working coal miner, which you could learn a lot doing. I took to him well. Randy was super-jacked when I first met him and was working 16 hours days underground plus still hitting the weights hard, too. Randy taught me a crazy work ethic and helped me get the job at his coal mine. The job made me learn how to work with real men who have busted their ass for years underground. I worked 80 to 90 hours per week for four to five months and saved money to start my life. I'll be forever thankful for what he helped me accomplish.

Dave Gregory: Routine and Dreamer

My dad Dave taught me a lot of things, good and bad. Dad was a different kind of a guy who kept to himself, but he carried a confidence that I definitely acquired. Dad was a routine person and a huge dreamer, which are both traits I adopted from him. I miss my dad; he passed away a few years back in a car accident. I know that I'm a better dad because of what he did and didn't do with me growing up. I love my dad and miss him.

He was always talking about big things he wanted to do. He had lots of ideas about how he wanted his life to be on a daily basis, and shared them with me often as I grew older. What he did on the weekends is basically what he wanted every day to be like. It's sad that he never got to experience that feeling. I miss ya dad.



Reggie Young: Personal Training Business

Reggie is the first guy who taught me the business of fitness and showed me a business model that I would follow for the next 10 years. Reggie was great with his customers and could charge \$25 per hour for personal training, and have five clients per hour. Reggie knew how to run a room, maximize his hours, and really sell his business. I learned a lot from him. I could see clearly how I could make \$100k per year as a trainer because Reggie was doing that right in front of my eyes. I learned from him for about two years.

Dr. Eric Serrano: Diet

I was taking a company's products called Beverly International in early 2000, and a guy by the name of Dr. Eric Serrano had formulated one of its main products. I did some research online and realized he lived only 10 minutes from me. I went to his office three times before I could catch him, but once I did I told him we should be friends. He laughed and asked why. I told him I would be the best guinea pig ever. "I want to learn from you," I said, "and have you help me reach my goals. I don't want anything free. I'll work for it." We did several dietary experiments: amino loading, fat loading, and training experiments. Dr. Serrano has been like a second dad to me and has helped me reach some great goals and challenged me to be better and learn more. Eric just helped reconfirm to me that by staying drug free and working hard I could achieve amazing things in fitness.





Louie Simmons: Power and Strength

Louie is the godfather of strength; he is one tough mofo who, when I wanted to learn powerlifting, answered my every question. I read his entire book and every article he had published. I got to train at his legendary, Westside Barbell in Columbus a few times, and

it's an atmosphere like no other. Louie was an early believer in my business and has always been solid. I don't get as much time around him as I like, but he has molded me into a much better lifter from his teachings. He was always willing to talk with me and answer any questions I may have had. I learned that it's possible for your gym to be world famous no matter where it is located. Louie definitely proved that. He also never sold out. He was always true to what he believed and over time his good material traveled all across the world. Louie is the true godfather of powerlifting and it's an honor to be able to see him from time to time and learn from him.

Arnold Schwarzenegger: Mindset Bodybuilding

I have been fortunate to be working with Arnold for a few years. He taught me that mindset is so important. He always thinks bigger and knows he can accomplish it. Arnold has been my idol so long that getting training, nutrition, or business advice from him is unreal.

Arnold shared with me that creating a vision is the most important thing you can do, and then you have to work like hell to make it a reality. Ruffle some feathers also. You don't always have to go by the norm. He

sure didn't. He also taught me sure to globally. I used to think locally or U.S.-only but now I only think on a worldwide level.

Quick story: on my 35th birthday he called and wished me happy birthday and said on his 35th he squatted 315 for 35 reps. Here I am, walking through Kohl's and Arnold challenged me to match this, which of course I did. I was whipped afterwards.



Bill Philips: Content and Business

What can I say about this guy? He is my business idol and has helped so many people through Met/Rx EAS and through his book, Body for Life, which sold six million copies. Bill has showed us all the way in the industry, and to get a chance to work with him on a project was amazing. Bill molded me indirectly all these years; now I was excited to be working with him directly.

Bill made me realize even more that what I do is valuable and impactful. He also taught me that he has similar passions as me and to not let that go no matter what happens. His counsel is really what made me want to take writing this book way more serious. I will be forever thankful for that because this book will not only change my life but a lot of others, too.

Go Two Steps More ...

I was always taught to under-promise and over-deliver. I love the ability to come through for people when they need something. I saw a mini documentary on Coach Urban Meyer of Ohio State, and he preached the same thing. He said he'd need two steps more when he was coaching; don't do just enough to get by. I always was a kid who would practice extra and try to learn more to be more prepared and ready for an event. Some people just roll through life just doing enough to get by, and some people do that plus two steps more. That's the key: Go two steps more.

MENTORSHIP

Work Space

List 5 people you look up to and could learn from right now either locally or globally.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Choose one of these people and contact them to see if they'd be willing to help you learn OR read a book that they may have written.

CHAPTER 12

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF



In our lives, sometimes we take better care of our car than we do our own body.

I know a lot of this book is about your mind, your mindset and really developing yourself. But I wanted to finish off the Mindset Manual with an array of training articles and diet plans; proven material that I know works. How do I know? Well, I was always the guinea pig and everything I'm about to reveal is tried and true, developed in the gym and in the kitchen. I've dedicated my life to fitness and I want to make sure to pass along that knowledge to you as well, giving you the full opportunity to develop and mold your body, inside and out.

I also truly want to make sure this book, this Mindset Manual, is an ongoing resource, to keep pushing you forward in life when you need a boost. If you feel like you're slumping, I want this book to be something you go to, draw from, and get back on track again, no matter the situation. I don't care if it's physical or mental, you should be able to flip back to something in here to identify with and get you motivated. I put a picture of myself above, and it was when I really let myself go. I tipped the scales at 240 pounds in this picture. It's definitely crazy to look back at this picture, but I wasn't taking my nutrition serious and I let the stress of business and everything going on get to me. It's pretty surreal to see, but it's a good reminder to you - and for me as well - that I wasn't always some ripped dude. I started out skinny with no muscle. I got ripped, but then blew up in a bad way, hence the picture above, but now I walk around in shape and strong pretty much all the time. It didn't happen overnight and it doesn't happen by simply snapping your fingers, but it is possible if you have goals, stay consistent, and always push forward. Basically, you adhere to the same mindset principles when it comes to your training and nutrition.

I have put out so much fitness material over the past 10 years that I thought it would be fitting to finish my book with the kind of material that made me popular in the first place. There's something for everyone and like the mindset principles, it's the material you can always go back to when you need a kick start in the gym.

Make sure to login and join CoryGFitness.com for ongoing training support, motivation, and unique diet techniques. Believe me, there's nothing cookie-cutter there. We have a great worldwide community and I would love to see you on there.

Training Articles

- #1 Beginner 30 Day NO Sugar Detox
- #2 Lunges for GAINZ
- #3 ABZ like Bricks
- #4 Front Squat Tips
- #5 Merry Christmas Tree
- #6 Box Jumps for Fat loss
- #7 Shoulders Like WHAT?
- #8 Eight Must Try Bicep Exercises
- #9 1k Workout
- #10 Arnold Press for a big Bench
- #11 Pause Squats
- #12 Abbing Nightly
- #13 Feet Up Bench Press for Gainz

#1 30 Day NO Sugar Detox Plan



I want you to try an easy-to-follow plan that can make you feel better, help you lose body fat, and make you healthier while teaching you how to make good decisions.

BASIC RULES:

30 DAY SUGAR DETOX

no sugar. no fruit. 1 month.

Get up. Exercise

30 min cardio. 30 min weights

MEAL 1 OPTIONS

Two to four whole eggs or sausage/bacon or cottage cheese or meat/nuts

Snack 1 (yogurt has to have five or under grams of sugar)

Carb master yogurt or Combat protein shake or coco protein shake or nuts

MEAL 2

Any meat

Beef, chicken, fish, turkey, pork,
with cucumbers or green beans

SNACK 2:

(yogurt has to have less than 5grams of sugar)

Carb master yogurt or Combat protein shake or coco protein shake or nuts

MEAL 3

Beef, chicken, fish, turkey, pork with cucumbers or green beans 1/2 sweet
potato or 1/4 cup of rice

If you are really sensitive to carbs

Have 1/2 avocado and 1 serving nuts

Bedtime if needed

Yogurt same as snacks

Here is an example of an easy-to-follow 1 month in home exercise program

3 Days per week workout M-W-F

Cardio

Beginner Workout 1

Walk really fast 1 minute

Walk regular speed 1 minute

30 minutes

Then:

Bodyweight circuit

Squat 15-20 reps

Crunches 15-20 reps

Lunge 5 per leg

Push-ups 10-20

Plank holds 30 seconds

Bench dips 10-20

2-3 sets

Weights circuit 2-4 sets in a row

Bench press 25 reps

Chests fly 25 reps

1-arm row 25 reps per side

Rear felt flys 25 reps

DB skull crutches 25 reps

DB kickbacks 25 reps

Biceps curls 25 reps

Hammer curls 25 reps

Lateral raise 25 reps

Crunches 25 reps

Saturday walk 60 minutes same intervals

#2 Lunges for GAINZ



To be honest, I pride myself on being half nuts in the gym. My mindset constantly revolves around testing my limits, whether it's getting ready to lift on the powerlifting platform or just getting as ripped as possible on stage. I'm not here to just hang out or adhere to the norm.

There's nothing that causes me to lose interest quicker than sticking with the status quo and going through the motions.

After my last Fitness RX shoot, which was featured in the last issue, I decided right after to make an appearance and compete at a local bodybuilding show. I came out of a 5-year retirement to jump on stage and I had three weeks to continue my diet after the shoot.

I was poised to make the 165-pound class, which is light as hell for me by the way. But I was determined to do it because I wanted my family to come see me in action. It gave my children a chance to see me on stage for the first time and the show was literally five minutes from my house.

I was already lean, so I decided just to push for three more grueling weeks.

I did have one issue, though, when stepping on stage. I had been battling some knee tendinitis from my journey earlier in the year of trying to dunk a basketball again.

With that in mind, I decided to get a little crazy and this is where my half-nuts, outside the box mindset came into play. I had to figure out the craziest thing I could do to bring my legs in quick for the show to give me a chance to win the overall.

So I settled on one of the most uncomfortable exercises that nobody really likes to do - walking lunges. Lunges are a great way to bring up your entire leg development for a show when you consider the glutes, hamstring tie-ins and quads.

But that was just step one of my crazy idea. I came up with the grand plan of lunging ½-mile to 1 mile per day as a way of combining cardio and leg training to get ready for the show. Guess what? I found out it was hard as hell but that it also worked wonders.

Not many people want to lunge 800 meters to 1 mile a day, but it's now something I've adopted into a 5-6 day a week practice. I have made it real clear that I really don't like cardio, but now I'm killing two birds with one stone while also sending my metabolism through the roof.

Now that I'm back to lifting heavier weights, the difference is incredible. All of that leg conditioning has carried over into all of my lifts in a major way, and I feel sturdy and strong under big weights even at a lighter bodyweight.

Plus, it's really made a difference in my conditioning, which leads me back to the bodybuilding show.

I ended up winning the 165-pound weight class, losing the overall by one point to a gigantic heavyweight. All in all, it was a massive success and I gained a huge weapon in my workout arsenal by pushing myself to the limit with the lunge routine I developed.

It has completely jumpstarted a new aspect of growth in my weight training and it has completely changed my metabolism.

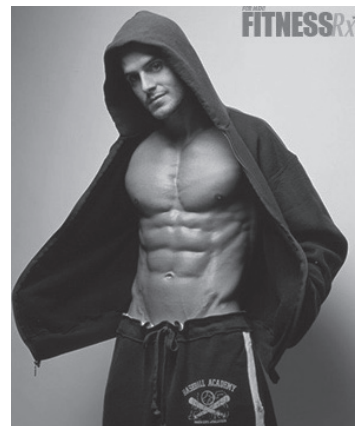
None of it would have happened had I not taken a chance on doing something a little wild and a little different. So that's what I urge you to do when it comes to your own training. Take some risks, be a little crazy and think outside the box and open yourself up to an entire new opportunity to progress.

To get a crazy result, sometimes you have to do some crazy shit. But when it's all over and you see the outcome, you'll know it was worth it.

#3 ABZ like Bricks

When I started my fitness journey in 1999, I gave myself two clear goals and that was to own a gym and be on the cover of magazines. While both are in the same general spectrum, they are vastly different in a number of ways. But that's what I wanted, giving me a clear goal to go after both in the gym and as a businessman.

Having my own gym didn't necessarily require great abs, but if I wanted to be on the cover of any fitness magazine I sure as hell needed them. It was absolutely a must and I wanted to do everything I could to create a unique set of abs that would stand out on any cover.



To start, I visualized myself on a magazine cover with deep grooves in my stomach, giving off almost a bricked-out look. I wanted that thick, ripped look for my abs, which is where the “ABZ like BRICKS” routine name came from.

To take it a step further, I would always joke about one day needing a hammer to sculpt a set of abs, further emphasizing the thick ab look I was after. Now, when I say “thick abs,” don’t get that confused with a bloated midsection. I still wanted to be lean, ripped, and with a small waist, much like the bodybuilders from the Golden Era looked. But if I could create a thickness aspect to my abs and really make them pop, that would be the best of both worlds.

To get there, I felt like I had to do something a little different with my ab training, which was no problem for me since all of my training is pretty much out-of-the-box and a mixture of a number of methods.

I saw a lot of people used high reps to train abs, but it dawned on me this wasn’t the path to go down. Sure, I needed to pound the reps when I trained my abs, but unless I used weight or some sort of resistance I could never achieve that thickness and look I was after.

Think of it this way: If you want big biceps, you don’t simply pump your arms 300 times with nothing in your hand and expect it to grow. You may find yourself on a YouTube fail video, but good luck getting your arms to grow. If you want them to grow, a dumbbell or barbell -preferably a heavy one - is an absolute must. Well, I didn’t view the abs any differently and I took the same approach with them from Day 1 when I set the goal of being on a magazine cover.

I started off with the dreaded - and perhaps underused and underutilized - ab wheel, which can build an extremely strong-looking stomach if done properly.

As a kid, I remember my mom doing them with a rolling pin and using great form, stuck with me ever since. I added in knee-ups - which progressed to weighted knee-ups and continuously harder variations - and heavy rope pull-downs, giving me a solid base from which to begin.

That was my beginner routine and, looking back, there was one error I made that I made sure to correct for you to get started. My lower back often gave me trouble and I now know it's because I didn't add in any lower back work to balance out all the ab work I was doing.

With back extensions, it's a great beginner ab routine and one that helped me really dial in my abs. Repeat the circuit for four sets and do it 3-5 times per week (even moving to everyday if you feel good) and you'll see some noticeable changes before moving onto something even more challenging.

Repeat for 4 sets

25 Ab Wheels

20 knee ups

12 Ab crunches with rope

30 back extensions

Do at least 3-5 times per week

As the magazine covers started to come in, I was pleased with the shape my abs started to take. I could definitely notice thickness but over time I made a few more adjustments to really make sure those deep grooves in my abs really stood out when it was time to get in front of the camera.

Below is the plan I still use to this day and it's worked well for a long time. I've added weighted crunches, placing the weight behind your head, and advanced past knee-ups to weighted toes to bar to really bring out your lower abs. I also have a morning workout, finishing it off with more weighted crunches before bed.

A.M. Workout

25 ab wheels

10 toes 2 bar with ankle weights

25 weighted crunch (25b behind head)

25 back extensions

Repeat for 4 sets

Before bed

200 more weighted crunches

Do at least 3-5 times per week

So if you want deep, thick grooves in a ripped set of abs - giving you that sculpted from granite look - this is how you do it.

I literally get a massive pump in my abs when I do this workout and that's when I know it's working. Give it a try, take it seriously and build your own granite midsection.

#4 Front Squat Tips

It was 534 days ago when my training forever changed.

For those who don't know much about me or the craziness that ensued more than a year ago, my training style had a total rebirth. I started squatting everyday - yes, every single day - with a conjugate style format in hopes of greatly increasing my strength and muscle mass. It's been more than 500

days and every day I've challenged myself on the squat, rotating squat-specific exercises daily.

Throughout this process and training overhaul I utilized many different versions of the program, but one of the most popular has been the Squat Everyday 2.0 plan that is on my YouTube page. I urge you to subscribe to my channel and take in all of the squat everyday madness on there.



Now when I first started, the initial 100 days were back squats only, neglecting the front squats for all the reasons I'm about to share and help you with in this article.

For one, I dodged the front squat because I simply didn't have the wrist flexibility to hold it properly in a clean grip. This, in my opinion, is the most effective way to utilize the front squat as opposed to the folded-arm route, which I feel isn't as athletic nor does it allow for maximum strength in the movement.

Second, I previously could never hit true depth on front squat due to ankle flexibility. When I mean true depth, I mean dropping into the bucket, getting Without flexibility in my ankles, I wasn't getting close to any of those terms, which means I sure as hell wasn't getting maximum benefit out of the front squat.

That needed to be fixed and I also needed to stay upright, a problem that revealed itself because I wasn't sure where the bar should truly sit. With

all of this, I felt like my back was at risk because I never felt comfortable in the lift, in part because of all the contributing factors previously mentioned.

It all added up to a complete mess and that was evident in my absolute lack of strength in the front squat, initially. I was trying to avoid injuring my back, but in the meantime I just felt incredibly weak. Well, that was it. I had enough of feeling that way and said, "Fuck it, it's time to fix my front squat." I went in the gym, got under the bar and got to work - which is always the best solution when you're trying to improve a lift. It's also the most obvious one but also a solution some seem to forget about. I wanted to get better at front squat. The solution? I needed to front squat a hell of a lot more, both in frequency and in weight, and I needed to start now.

The first day I front squatted was simply awful. I did a measly 205 pounds, almost dropped the weight, didn't hit depth, almost choked myself out due to improper bar position and I just felt awful in general. It was clear I had plenty of work to do.

But as I got better and fixed those problem areas - bar position, wrist flexibility, ankle flexibility, hitting depth - a funny thing happened. I never had to worry about injury as my back, and specifically my lower back, got immensely stronger. My deadlift skyrocketed like never before and, working hand-in-hand, my front squat shot up as well. I didn't truly realize the front squat is so core-oriented until I saw how much it helped my deadlift.

My conventional deadlift was 425 when I started and I recently hit an easy 550 at 189lbs, also pulling 405 through 220 lbs. of band tension. My sumo deadlift is at 575 pounds, which I did weighing 198, and, oh yeah, my front squat is remarkably better as well. That 205 I did the first day is a distant memory as I have maxed out at 405, routinely hitting 315 or more for paused reps on the front squat.

I have come a long way thanks to fixing those problem areas and these tips can undoubtedly help your front squat game out as well.

It can be one of the most difficult lifts to master at first, but take note of each of these tips and watch not only your front squat reach new levels but your deadlift as well.

Tip #1

Wrist flexibility

Tip #2

Ankle flexibility

Tip #3 bar placement lat activation

Tip #4

Pause reps

Tip#5

Using belt

#5 Merry Christmas Tree

When it comes to bodybuilding, the Christmas tree isn't just about gifts, wrapping paper, fancy bows and hoping you're grandma didn't buy you yet another reindeer sweater.

The Christmas tree is a definite game-changer when it comes to show time or photo shoots, and a defined, thick lower back - in a distinctive Christmas tree shape - can separate you from your competition.



The big question is, "How you develop this area?", which isn't exactly the easiest to target.

With a lot of experimentation and trying a lot of different things, I've managed to chop down some killer methods for building a "Christmas tree" lower back.

I've had a lot of different people comment on my lower back when I did my own prepping for photo shoots and bodybuilding shows, wanting to know the secret for etching out that tree.

The point I always make to beginners and young lifters who are quickly frustrated is the benefit of multiple variations of pull-ups. That means different grips (overhand, neutral, underhand), different accessories used (v-Bar, ropes, etc.) and then really focusing on squeezing and arching your back at the top of the movement.

That squeezing and arching at the top of a pull-up certainly isn't easy - and takes some impressive control and overall back strength - but nobody said it would be easy to bring out that Christmas tree.

Of course, I've always preached to clients about squeezing big and squeezing hard at the end of any back exercise, but that especially holds true when it comes to pull-ups and lower back development.

The best cue I came up with when training these back movements is imagine trying to hold a pencil up between your shoulder blades. once you picture that, you can really dive into that mind-muscle connection, which is a big key in learning how to squeeze and arch those back muscles.

Going back to exercises, specifically the pull-up in this instance. It's an incredibly beneficial exercise and one we throw into our back workouts usually twice a week. Our mainstay is the Rocky or V-bar pull-up which was

made famous by Franco Columbo and Arnold in the Venice Beach golden era day. As far as execution of the movement, the focus is on squeezing and arching the back, almost trying to perform a seated row to the bar when doing the pull-up.

Another crucial exercise to lower back development has been 1-arm dumbbell rows. When doing these, we try to really pull them into the hip pocket and not shoulder-width or higher up along the back. This is big in activating the lower back muscles, stimulating that musculature in that area. Again, squeezing and visualizing the lower back muscles working on this exercise is incredibly important.

Lastly, we finish up with some high-volume back extension work. We actually do this movement about 4-5 times per week and it's great for targeting your lower back and getting an awesome pump in that area. The key here is really "high volume." When I say high volume with regard to back extension, I mean some extreme high volume, doing anywhere from 25-50 reps for 3-4 sets. To get really crazy, we'll hold a 45-lb. weight for this exercise, which can really etch in some detail to your lower back.

Before you know it, a "Christmas tree" may just appear on your lower back.

If you want to take the first step in getting a defined Christmas tree, check out these go-to exercises and rep ranges below:

v-Bar or Rocky Pull-Ups

1-Arm Rows

Back Extensions

#6 Box Jumps for Fat loss



As most people who follow me on Twitter (@corygfitness) are aware, I am not a huge fan of long-duration cardio at all. In fact, you could probably say without much hesitation that long distance cardio and I don't exactly see eye-to-eye.

But that's not to say I don't believe in cardio because it's certainly a must-have in this game. Diet and weight training are certainly crucial, but your cardio must be just as important in the equation if you care at all about being lean.

The problem is that a lot of times people are lacking motivation when it comes to cardio. Let's be honest, walking on a treadmill for an hour is about as exciting as a marathon debate on C-Span 2.

That's why when I post my daily fat-burning workout, I make sure to keep it fresh so your fat-burning doesn't get stale. You'll never see, "Walk on a slight incline for an hour" as my fat-burning workout of the day. I'm mixing methods, keeping it fresh and, most of all, keeping it intense.

One thing I've really grown to like is implementing box jumps, and, yes, box jumps can be used as a great tool to burn fat. Plus, they're great for performance, which means you can improve your athletic ability while burning fat and getting lean at the same. So, yeah, for just a wooden box it's a pretty good tool. Before I detail some great box jump fat-burning workouts I want to clue you in on how beneficial this movement can be when used to reach a certain goal.

I've always been a big basketball fan and have always admired the athletic ability that goes along with the sport. With that, jumping was always something of a priority for me and at just 5-foot-11 it was always fun and exciting for me to be able to dunk a basketball. At 36, I can still throw down an alley-oop on a good day, something I definitely attribute to all my time spent box jumping. I'm not saying windmill dunks are in your immediate future, but here's two great and quick box-jumping workouts and two performance-based jumping workouts that will certainly help you shed fat and improve that cardio, all without having to get near the dreaded treadmill.

Two Quick Fat-Burning Box Jump Workouts

I

- 100 Box Jumps in a row onto a 24-inch box
- Perform two sets with 2 minutes rest in between sets.
- Do the jumps following a weight-training session

II

- 25 box jumps in a row onto a 24-inch box
- Then, 15 box jumps in a row onto a 32-inch box
- Finish with 5 box jumps in a row onto a 40-inch box

Here's a pair of Performance Workouts with box jumps. These are great for building explosion along with the previously mentioned benefit

I

- Do 5 box jumps onto a 24-inch box while holding dumbbells (or wearing weighted vest) - Repeat for 5 sets
- Then, Do 5 box jumps onto a 32-inch box while holding dumbbells (or wearing weighted vest) - Repeat for 5 sets
- Finish with 3 box jumps onto a 40-to-50-inch box with no weight (it's okay to take a few steps to build momentum) - Repeat for 3 sets

II

- Do 5 box jumps onto a 24-inch box while holding dumbbells (or wearing weighted vest) Then, Do 5 box jumps onto a 32-inch box while holding dumbbells (or wearing weighted vest)
- Finish with 5 box jumps onto a 24-inch box with no weight and 5 box jumps onto a 32-inch box with no weight

#7 Shoulders Like What?



When you see a boxer hit the ring, one of the first things you notice is likely a pair of capped shoulders. That comes from hours in the gym, but their massive shoulders didn't come from years of lateral raises. Of course, it's from hours and hours of practicing their craft, but it also got me onto the idea of something different when I was looking for pronounced, sick-looking shoulders.

If what you're doing isn't working and you want to take your shoulders to another level, then I've got the perfect thing for you. I know because it's what I came across and it really made a major difference in my shoulder development. It also went back to boxing and some killer boxing-related workouts. Now, you're not training to become a fighter, but what I came up with certainly included some aspects of fighter training. I always felt as though the speed bag was a great way to really bring in shoulder muscularity and it's become a staple of endurance for decades in boxing. Pick anyone who can pound away at the speed bag with lightning fury and you're going to find a person with some standout shoulders. I started using the speed bag, which

was the first step. I had also started adding in weighted dumbbell punches for my training clients for conditioning. That represented the second stage of this out-of-the-box shoulder routine.

The final step was a nod to my powerlifting days and my time following the legendary Westside Barbell program. With that, we utilized a tremendous amount of band work and I found the best warm-up and burnout exercise for my shoulders were band face pulls. Use high reps with these, and you're going to get a killer burn.

So, the next step was adding it all together into one standout shoulder routine. I merged everything together for a sick, fat-burning workout that not only helped my cardio, but also capped my shoulders and made that body part look freaky.

Hopefully this sounds like a win-win for your shoulder development and you're ready to get after it.

Here's the plan of attack for this shoulder killer:

- Set up the speed bag and rock n' roll for two minutes, going as intense and fast as your ability and rhythm is able to handle.
- After two minutes are completed, pick up a pair of 5 lb. dumbbells and do two minutes of rapid-fire punches. This is going to create an unbelievable burn, but keep after it for two minutes.
- When that is completed, roll right into 30 reps of face pulls with a band to finish it off.

It takes about six minutes to complete this circuit, so take a 60-second rest following it and then get back after it.

I usually repeat the circuit 5-6 times and then call it a day.

There's no question this circuit is brutal, but it will bring out your shoulders in an incredible way. Plus you get added conditioning with it, bringing out some killer muscle striations in your shoulders. You know, like a boxer.

Shredded Shoulders Circuit:

- 2 minutes speed bag
- 2 minutes rapid fire punches with 5 lb. dumbbells
- 30 reps of face pulls
- Rest 1 minute
- Repeat for 5-6 sets

#8 Eight Must Try Bicep Exercises



Find me a person who doesn't want bigger arms, and more specifically bigger biceps, and you'll have found me a liar.

Without question, we all want giant biceps, ones that would make C.T. Fletcher proud and a pair of pipes has everyone doing a double-take. Of course, it's not just about picking up a pair of dumbbells and doing the same thing week after week, month after month.

In my own quest for bigger biceps, I've tried about everything, been game for anything, and even created my own twists on bicep classics. Ultimately, that's where you benefit because I'm giving you "8 Amazing Bicep Exercises" that will undoubtedly send your biceps to another level.

I've been training in a hardcore gym for more than 15 years and that's the basis for each of these eight movements. Some of them have some Golden Era bodybuilding inspiration, others have a little nod to the master of arms, C.T. Fletcher, and others are my own innovations on classic movements from years in the iron game. The unique thing about this group of bicep exercises is that I've tried to incorporate a number of different time periods, influences, mentors and lifting partners, giving you the greatest chance to see some serious bicep growth. No matter your goals, there is something here for you. These are intense, no-holds barred movements, but that's also what it takes to have your shirts ready to rip at the seams.

Exercise 1: Larry Scott Preacher Curls

These are a nod to the original Mr. Olympia, Larry Scott, who had the equivalent of bowling balls for biceps. He loved the preacher curl, but his version is a little different because it's with a straight bar. That changes the focus but another important factor is tucking the elbows and keeping them close together.

You won't be able to do as much weight and it takes away all momentum, but the end result is a huge rush of blood to the biceps. Believe me, you'll notice the difference.

Exercise 2: Alternating Incline Dumbbell Curls - With a Twist

At first these seem like any other incline dumbbell curl, which is a great bicep movement in its own right, but we add something a little extra with the

twist. After 6-8 reps, let the double hang and rotate in a 360-degree motion for a five count before finishing off the set.

Again, the blood rushes to your bicep with this twist and proceeds to blow up your bicep. You finish off with a 3-5 more reps, producing a monstrous pump that really gets the bicep growing. These are a great addition to your bicep work and an innovation I go to often in my workout.

Exercise 3: Dave Draper Forehead Curls

This is a definite Golden Era classic from the great Dave Draper, but a very under utilized exercise in my view. It's great for really hitting your bicep peak and it's also a great way to increase your overall bicep strength. You're doing a regular barbell curl here but you're bringing the bar up to your forehead, letting your bicep do the work to get it there. If this is done under strict and under control, your strength on the regular barbell curl will skyrocket. Give that bicep a good squeeze at the top of this and you'll definitely notice a difference.

Exercise 4: 28 Method Curls

This creation of mine is always a go-to, no matter what body part is being tortured. For the biceps, I use a barbell and it completely blows up my arms. If you're unfamiliar with the 28 Method, it's 7 regular reps, 7 slow reps (both on the way up and down) 7 half-reps at the top and 7 half-reps at the bottom. The slow reps engorge your biceps with blood and you're guaranteed to have an unbelievable pump after just one set. You're using much less weight than normal, but the results - and the pump - are off the charts after just 3-4 sets.

Exercise 5: Arnold Cheat Curls

We head back to the Golden Era and borrow the Arnold Cheat Curl from the legendary Arnold Schwarzenegger. This is a great way to add mass to your biceps and it's worked well for me. The key is knowing just how much to "cheat," with the answer being "not much."

We're certainly not talking a full body thrust that may get you kicked out of any respectable gym (including mine), but a nice, controlled bump at the bottom. Focus on just a little momentum boost from the hips to get you started and let the bicep do the rest. It's a great way to overload the bicep, forcing it to get stronger and forcing them to grow. Don't go too crazy on the weight unless you're ready but make sure you do challenge yourself and go a little higher than you're usual curling weight.

Exercise 6: one-Arm Dumbbell Preacher Curl

C.T. Fletcher may command his arms to grow, firing out a string of expletives at his biceps in the process, but he does plenty of work as well. This is one of his favorites that I really enjoy.

With your arm tucked into the preacher bench (or incline bench) and the rest of your body tight and locked in, you can really push some serious weight on this. I like hitting around 4-5 reps, going as heavy as I can to really build that bicep mass. A lot of high-rep bicep work is great for that pump, but don't forget about going heavy with this and the cheat curls.

Exercise 7: Two-Part Alternating Hammer Curl

Hammer curls can often be neglected in bicep work, but it's something I also try to throw into my arm day. This two-part hammer curl is my own little twist on the exercise, simply combining both variations of the hammer curl into one overall rep. This allows you to take advantage of everything each

variation offers and serves as a great way to really add size to your bicep and forearm.

Exercise 8: Machine Curl

We'll finish this series with a great high-rep killer to send that bicep growth into overdrive. With a machine curl, I don't like digging in like a preacher curl or completely flattening out my arm.

The focus here is just squeezing the bicep, so give yourself a good angle to really enable a massive pump. Think about turning that bicep into a softball, squeeze hard and you'll get much more out of a machine curl than you typically would.

#9 1k Workout

- Pull-ups -100 reps (total)
- Toes to bars -100 reps (total)
- Ring Dips - 100 reps (total)
- Ring pushups - 100 reps (total)
- Bodyweight Squats - 100 reps(total) v-bar
- chin-ups - 100 reps
- Plyo-pushups - 100 reps
- Dips - 100 reps
- Box Jumps - 100 reps (24-32)
- Ab wheels - 100 reps



If there's one thing I don't want to be associated with, it's being stale, so I've done everything in my power to live on the opposite side of the spectrum, especially when it comes to training. With that, I certainly don't have one kind of training style. In fact, if I was

forced to name my overall training style, I think “outside the box” is the best way to put it. I like to include everything and I’m not afraid to try anything. I’ve developed a crazy mix of 1970s Golden Era bodybuilding, Powerlifting, Crossfit and about anything else you could list. I’m not married to one style or one particular method because I always like to keep my training fun and exciting. That keeps me motivated, keeps my workouts intense and, best of all, keeps the results coming.

After pounding the weights Monday through Friday, I wanted to find a workout that allowed me to “Master my Bodyweight.” I studied a variety of methods, borrowed some intense and very cool concepts, and the end product is my “1,000-Rep Workout.” And, yes, that’s three zeros you just read. This certainly isn’t for the feint of heart.

In coming up with this killer, I wanted to set up something that would be a challenge - and perhaps then some - for myself and my super intense training group at the hardcore Old School Gym, as well as all the dedicated CoryGfitness.com fans on Facebook and my followers on Twitter.

It’s been five months since we’ve started the 1,000-rep madness and the results have been nothing short of incredible. We’ve all gotten much better at this particular workout, but the most amazing thing has been how much stronger everyone has gotten outside of this workout. Lifts on just about every exercise have shot up in remarkable fashion, and this workout has been a big reason why.

We’ve got a whole range of people doing this workout as well, from golf pros to NFL players to major track stars, to regular Joes, and all of them have had amazing results.

Just the feeling of accomplishment you get from finishing 1,000 reps in a workout is good enough, but that euphoria continues when you realize the mind-blowing pump and then the carry-over you get in your weight training.

Confidence is a huge thing in this workout, too. I always tell them if they get good at this, everything else in their workouts gets easier, smoother and sturdier. Believe me, if you finish this, you feel like you can accomplish anything in the weight room. But this workout definitely isn't easy and isn't for the feint of heart.

At some point, your weakness will show up, whether it is on something like pull-ups right out of the gates or the excruciating ring dips. It's at that point you have to dig down and keep pushing forward, not focusing on the pain but rather the end goal.

With that in mind, we try to complete this workout in a few sets as possible and as quick as possible. With practice and with countless trips to the torture chamber to get this bad boy done your sets and times will go down. At our best, 25 sets is the lowest we've gotten down to and quickest we've finished is around an hour.

So you've now got that to shoot for, and without further ado, welcome to my Saturday at the old School Gym:

It's the 1,000-rep workout, so let's get after it!

Exercise 1 -- Wide-Grip Chins

I start off with wide grip chin-ups, which can be a very intimidating exercise without even adding 100 reps to the equation. In my opinion, if you get through this, you're good and well on your way to 1,000 reps. I like to use a pretty wide grip to really smoke the lats and get some back conditioning going at the same time. Over the past 6-12 months, I have received a lot of compliments on my back and the basis of my back training is always pull-ups.

For whatever reason, people tend to shy away from this exercise. It's difficult, there's no denying that, but that's why it goes first here. We attack the

most difficult one head on to start, and get after it right away. Make sure your reps are as clean as possible and get 100 total reps here before you move on, no matter how long it takes you.

Exercise 2 -- Toes to Bar

The next exercise is the sleeper in this 1,000-rep workout. Overlook it and it will definitely bite you. At first, it seems like no big deal. I mean it's toes to bar, right? How hard can it be?

Well, let me tell you, this has become the staple in my ab training for a reason. The definition this puts on your abs is great and it really adds to your performance. It's become a staple in the CrossFit community, but I was floored how hard this was the first time I struggled through 100 non-swinging reps. This completely taxes your low back and entire abdominal region more than you realize, and I felt my lower abs thicken up a tremendous amount just by doing this exercise on a regular basis. Plus, I can't say enough about how much this exercise will help your core lifts. If your abs are weak, this will expose you immediately, but after a few weeks, you will be singing this one's praises. Everyone in my 5 a.m. groups have seen their deadlifts shoot up, and there's no doubt this exercise is a huge reason why.

Exercise 3 -- Ring Dips

So, you want to test your shoulder stability? Well, here you go. Set up a pair of olympic rings and, yes, do dips - 100 of them. Your body and especially your shoulders have to stabilize to perform this lift and it's not easy. In fact, I have seen some very strong people shake so much on these that they can't even get started. But once you get this down the benefits are outstanding. Once they've gotten the movement down, their bench reps fly up. Ring dips certainly test your upper body strength at a high level and this is a perfect exercise when we talk about mastering your bodyweight, which is the basis

behind the 1,000-rep workout. Stabilization of the shoulder, combined with strong triceps and chest strength is definitely needed to perform this exercise.

Exercise 4 -- Ring Pushups

We once again utilize the olympic rings, and it doesn't get any easier. For these 100 reps, we are performing a full pushup, stabilizing our upper body in between the olympic rings. This is very taxing on the shoulders and helps build up an unreal stability and strength in your chest and triceps especially. By the fourth exercise - and 400 total reps - your upper body is feeling a bit fatigued, but there's plenty more left in store.

Exercise 5 -- Body Squats

Now it's time to incorporate some lower body work and, when you're talking lower body exercises, you start with the master of all of them, the squat. Since this is a bodyweight conditioning routine we want to take what is essentially air squats deep and with very clean form. I always grab at 10 or 20lb medicine ball as a guide to make sure I am going below parallel on each rep. The funny thing is most people don't understand doing 100 squats in a row is pretty difficult, even if it is bodyweight. The important thing is to make sure your form is clean and you get it done in as few sets as possible. After these 100 reps are done, you're officially at the halfway point.

Exercise 6 -- v-bar Pull-ups

The v-bar pull-ups are a great retro exercise I pulled from the Arnold and Franco Columbo Golden Era bodybuilding days. I love this exercise because it's challenging and really brings out the muscularity in your mind and lower back. These are great for really developing that Christmas tree in your lower back and the proper arch at the top is key in that regard. I just image that I am doing a seated row with my own body the entire time, cranking out 100

reps in as few sets as possible. This is what is cool about mixing fitness worlds together: We jump right from a Crossfit move (Ring pushups) into a 1970's bodybuilding exercise (v-Bar pull-ups). Now that's what I call thinking outside the box.

Exercise 7 -- Plyo pushups

When I devised the 1,000-rep workout plan I wanted to do pushups, but I needed them to be a bit harder than a regular pushup while still having 100 reps as an attainable goal. That's where the plyo pushup fits into things. The rules are simple with the plyo pushup - your hands just have to leave the ground. This makes the exertion your body has to put into each rep much greater but most still can finish the 100 reps in a reasonable manner, even at this point of the workout. I also like how the explosiveness of this movement carries over in to normal everyday gym lifts. After this, "only" 300 reps remain.

Exercise 8 -- Dips

Performing these 100 dips might initially feel 100 times easier than the ring dips from earlier in the workout, but your body will still struggle because you're looking head-on at 800 reps in one workout. With this movement, it's up to you weather you want to keep your head down or up, but just make sure you get full range on each rep and lock out. I want you to get a nice stretch on these, as it really opens up your chest. Throw them in on a consistent basis - or knock out 100 reps of these during the 1,000-rep workout - and it will really add to your chest fullness.

Exercise 9 -- Box Jumps (24-36-inch box)

We have a lot of NFL and NCAA athletes in our training group, so I felt it was important to add an athletic, explosive bodyweight exercise like box jumps. Again, it all goes back to mastering your bodyweight and the box

jump certainly gives you that opportunity. Before we go any further, let me just say 100 box jumps are no joke. I am definitely spent by this point and my entire mindset through these 100 reps is to simply not eat the box. I go as high (usually up to 36 inches) as I can tolerate, and simply take a drop step and explode up. As for your landing, I like to quote Westside Barbell legend Louie Simmons, who always said to “land like a ninja.” Make sure to land in a good position for your joint to receive your bodyweight on the box, and then step down. And then only 100 reps remain.

Exercise 10 -- Ab wheels

We throw in a doozy for the finisher, the good ‘ole ab wheel. Your entire body is thrashed by this point, so make sure you really pay attention to the form in the pictures. Starting in a bad position can get you hurt, so keep the technique in line for these final 100 reps. I like to start with my back already arched up like a scared cat and then flatten it out as I move forward, just using your abs and lower back to stabilize yourself. The ab wheel will definitely thicken your abs and serratus because it’s a similar motion to the highly underrated dumbbell pullover exercise. Plus, an ab wheel is as cheap as \$10, making one a real win-win situation for you. I’ve been dedicated to this movement and it has paid major dividends for me. Finish these 100 reps and you’ve not only finished 1,000 reps, you’ve just mastered your own bodyweight.

Conclusion

The 1,000-rep workout certainly looks crazy and challenging on paper, and there’s nothing easy about it, but once you get into the trenches, it can be fun and extremely motivating. After a few times through, this 1,000-rep madness also becomes incredibly rewarding. The big thing is not getting flustered at first. Attack it with vigor and confidence and if you need to scale

it down to 50 reps for each exercise (and 500 overall), that's cool, too. The important thing is just jumping in, having fun, pushing yourself and just doing it.

From there, you can up the intensity by reducing your overall sets for each exercise or trying to beat your time each time you do it. The vast amounts of benefits will become noticeable almost as soon as you're done with the first one.

Thanks for checking out my craziness and I hope you're ready to attack your first 1,000-rep workout. I think you'll be glad you did.

#10 Arnold Press for a Big Bench

Of all the reasons Arnold Schwarzenegger is considered a legend - and there are certainly many - here's one that has always been unique and interesting to me: The man has an actual exercise named after him. As a guy who has loved the gym for as long as I can remember, that's a definite sign of making it big.

Arnold has made it big on several levels, but he also had a great shoulder exercise named after him in the early 1970s called the Arnold Press. Since then, most all of us gym rats have performed this exercise, enjoying the benefits this unique movement gives you.

In most cases, the lifter instantly feels the stability of the move and how it basically works the entire shoulder, making it one of the most complete shoulder movements around. As far as building shoulder mass and development it was one of my go to movements and I made it a major part of my shoulder workout for years at my hardcore gym, Old School Gym in the Columbus, OH area.

But almost by accident I found an amazing tweak and twist on the Arnold Press, and it gave me an impressive exercise to help build a bigger bench press.

For anyone struggling with getting their own bench press up - whether in competition or just in the gym - implementing what I'm about to tell you may just be the key to your own bench press blast-off.

One day I was waiting to use the 90-degree bench for my set, but it was in use so I jumped on the incline bench and went to work on my set. Instantly, I knew I had found a winner. It felt sick and I was blown away with the effect it had on pretty much my entire upper body.

I discovered that rotating the dumbbells down in the hole (at the bottom-most part of the movement), really loaded up my lats, triceps, shoulders and pecs to an explosive position. It engaged all of them and really made all of those muscle works, making it very similar to a paused bench press in a competition.

While I was competing in powerlifting, I became almost obsessed with this movement, as its benefits were immense. In my mind, I had found my own golden ticket when it came to the perfect accessory movement to boosting my bench press. I eventually worked up to an impressive six reps using 115-pound dumbbells and the carry-over was huge.

For your own benefit, I suggest 3-4 sets of 8-12 reps, using it on your bench day if your goals are more powerlifting related and throwing it in on shoulder day if your goals are centered on bodybuilding.

Ultimately I was able to bench press more than 400 pounds raw, double my bodyweight, and 500 in a bench shirt, and I attribute a great deal of that improvement to the Arnold Press tweak and simply doing it on an incline bench.

The reasoning behind why it helped was evident to me. The stability this movement gave my shoulders, pecs, triceps and upper back was remarkable and my pop out of the hole, usually a weakness for a raw lifter, increased significantly.

Well fast forward a little bit and I feel like I almost owe Arnold an apology because I pretty much forgot about the exercise until recently. I was fortunate enough to shoot five covers for different magazines and even competed in a bodybuilding show in the early fall, so the Arnold Press with a twist got left on the back burner. But it's time to switch gears and get back to powerlifting, and that meant immediately going back to this movement. I threw it back into my rotation and it was like an old friend had returned. I rediscovered the move, why I loved it and why I believe it is so integral for anyone looking to build a bigger bench.

So thanks, Arnold, for having the intuition to create such a powerful movement and I can only hope you guys like my tweak to this already legendary exercise.

#11 Pause Squats

If you follow me on social media you find out real quick that I am a full-fledged squat maniac. I squat every single day now and wholeheartedly believe in the benefits, whether it's the simply completing the challenge of it to the noteworthy strength gains I've made while getting leaner.



But there's always a way to up the ante and I've tried to find a way to do that, even while maintaining my squat everyday mantra. In pause squats, I've definitely found a way to get a little crazier and it has become a huge part of my daily squat arsenal.

They are difficult and they can be humbling, but adding pause squats into your routine can make a huge difference in any program, whether you're squatting every day or once a week.

My pause squat interest came about when I started following my favorite Olympic weightlifter on Instagram, 2008 silver medalist Dmitry Klokov. Besides being an absolute animal in the gym when it comes to pretty much any lift, Klokov is a big advocate of pause squats with very heavy weight. Of course, his heavy weight and everyone else's heavy weight is going to be vastly different but the message remains the same - using heavy pause squats in your routine is going to lead to big gains when it comes to your regular squat.

In my opinion, a major reason why pause squats are so effective is because they help you get really comfortable in the most uncomfortable part of the lift. Take any bad ass in the lifting game, and Klokov certainly qualifies as one, and they are always able to take the worst part of any lift and make it as comfortable as possible.

It takes some serious work and some major grinding through heavy weights, but pause squats can do that for you. But it's simply not doing them, running through the motions and expecting your regular squat to fly up. You're going to have to raise your intensity level, dial in your technique and learn how to power through a dead stop in the squat hole. There's nothing easy about pause squatting a heavy weight but the sense of satisfaction can be immense.

To be honest, I've also noticed a huge improvement in my Olympic-style squat and my bottom position flexibility.

The pause squat forces your body to be in the proper position but you also find where your restart power is at the bottom of the squat. It's going to be different for each person, but finding it can help you generate even more power, which obviously leads to a bigger squat. The pauses, in addition to just flat-out making you stronger, can help you discover all sorts of little intricacies at the key spots of a squat, another reason they are so beneficial.

My entire goal is to be a freak out of the hole of my squat and, to be honest, it's not going to be possible without adding in some pause squats. I've applied pauses to both my front and back squat to improve my overall squat game, but the benefits don't just stop with that lift. Pause squats have had a direct influence on my deadlift training simply by making my lower back so much stronger.

I bought some Reebok Olympic shoes, watched some Instagram videos and started squatting everyday nearly 200 days ago and, without a doubt, adding pause squats into the mix has been one of the most important parts of this journey.

If you're interested in applying them to your squat game, check out some of my videos at @musclepharmpres and also check out Klovov's as well. I listed a progression of an example pause squat day below, working up to a daily max and then including back off sets with longer pauses (sometimes up to 30 seconds). The reload of the weight in addition to being warmed up allows you to hold that pause for a much longer time after you hit that max weight. It also helps make you a freak out of the hole and that's pretty much what we're all after.

I've found out that this helped make me pretty damn strong and I'm very confident it can help your squat game a great deal as well.

So take a second (or two or three or even more), pause, and get to work.

My Best Pause Squat Day at a bodyweight of 190 pounds

Bar - 2 sets of 10 reps (solid dead stop in the bottom for at least one second)

95 lbs. - 2 sets of 5 reps

135 - 2 sets of 5

185 - 1 set of 3

225 - 1 set of 3

275 - 1 set of 3

315 - 1 set of 3

365 1 set of 1

Back-off sets

315 for 1 with 5-second pause

275 for 1 with 10-second pause

225 for 1 with 30-second pause

#12 Abbing Nightly

It doesn't take a keen observer to know that abs are one of those muscle groups people just can't get enough of when it comes to training, improving and getting dialed in.

It's been that way for a long time and I'm definitely in the group who is always impressed when I see someone who has a peeled midsection and is rocking thick abs. Since I first started training and did my first crunch, that's

something I've strived to achieve. I wanted them when I was a competitive athlete and I sure as hell wanted them in my pursuit to being a big-time magazine cover guy one day.

Without them, you're going nowhere in that industry, so I knew I had to dial them in, make them a strength and make them stand out.

Well, I guess you could say it has been mission accomplished. I have been featured on three magazine covers available all over the world and I've been fortunate enough to set up five more for 2014. A lot of that has to do with having a peeled-in midsection and thick abs that stand out from other people. I've worked hard to turn them into a definite strength - and obviously diet is hugely critical as well - but I wanted to pass on a simple Ab routine I do each night before I go to bed. It's been highly beneficial to me and it's something you can easily implement each night.

My beautiful wife came up with the perfect name, too, as she would always ask, "Honey, are you 'Abbing' again?" That usually means, yes, I'll be on the floor for 10-20 minutes trying to get those abs straight nasty. I'm also the weirdo that has the following lying beside his bed: a 25-pound plate, an ab wheel and a broomstick.

But the payoff is worth it, so with those tools in hand, lets get to my nightly "Abbing" routine, which includes 300-500 total reps nightly.

- Abbing Nightly Tri-Set (300-500 reps total)
- Regular Crunches (with feet elevated on bed) - 25 reps
- Weighted Crunches (25-pound plate behind my head, feet elevated on bed) - 25 reps
- Ab Wheel - 10 reps
- Repeat for 5-10 sets

It's pretty straightforward but it's also highly effective.

My stomach and abs always seem to show and stand out, even when my body fat reaches a bit higher level, and that's because my abs are really thick from all the weighted work I do each night. It's also worth mentioning I train my lower back every day after my #Upearlytotrain workout also, and that's made a big difference, too.

We train it for volume as well and it usually looks something like this:

- Roman Chair - 3 sets of 30-50 reps
- GHD Raises - 3-4 sets of max reps (really works the lower posterior chain)

I up the intensity with my nightly ab routine as I get closer to my meet or photo shoot, but those are the basics. It can definitely help and if done consistently it can definitely pay major dividends in making your midsection a strong point.

A consistent approach is a great plan of attack and before long you'll have abs that will draw attention - all with just a little work before bed.

Happy Abbing!

#13 Feet Up Bench Press for Gains

Whenever I need to get a particular lift going in the right direction, I almost always go back and look for some old-school advice. I enjoyed the mindset of that era where the emphasis was on small variations and tremendous work ethic. I love getting in the trenches, grinding out reps and pushing my body to the extreme, so that's where I was at when I inspected where my bench press was. It certainly wasn't in an awful place, but it needed

a bit of an overhaul and I was ready to jumpstart it. So, in the quest to take my bench press to new levels, I simply looked back. I also didn't have to look far for the solution.

I grew up watching my stepdad, Randy Thompson, pounding away at the weights in our basement. At 5-foot-8, 185 pounds, he would unrack 300plus pounds with no spotter and go to work on his bench press. The catch? He did it all with his feet in the air and he looked as smooth as can be. If there's an equivalent to watching someone glide through the air for a dunk, watching him cruise through 300-pound bench presses with his feet in the air was it for me. The amazing thing was Randy would work 16-hour days underground as a coal miner, come home and immediately head to the basement where he would routinely hit these numbers on the bench press. Thinking back on that, I figured this method - keeping his legs up and bent at a 90-degree angle - had some merit. If you have ever seen anyone in the gym benching in this manner, you can usually bet it's a strong and stacked older lifter. So I began to experiment and quickly found benching this way had tremendous value.

The reason I became such a fan of lifting this way to increase my strength is, quite simply, you can't cheat the system because there is literally no leverage. You don't incorporate leg drive and you don't get that extra boost you can usually rely on when your feet are firmly planted on the ground. To make up for it, you simply have to get stronger. This way of benching is beneficial in a number of ways and the carryover to your regular bench press can be immense. With your feet up, it makes you learn how to grind weight out while also teaching you to really incorporate your lats, shoulders, triceps into the lift. With that comes an ability to push yourself when it comes to handling heavier weight, an important aspect if you ever want to bench big numbers. And let's be honest, we all want that.

I have adapted this feet-up type of lifting again on the bench press as I also started to take a wider grip in my training. I had been utilizing a close grip in my training, but switching to this approach has revived my bench press. I am back to benching 300 with my feet up, repping out 225 with ease. At the same time, my chest is growing again and the size gains have been impressive. Getting stronger and getting bigger were good enough for me, but it also had a major impact when I got back in my bench shirt and put my feet back on the ground. My weights have gone up steadily there, too, and my competition bench feels flat-out awesome. I'm able to push through weights and grind out some serious improvements and I owe it all to the feet-up bench press.

If you need a new movement for your bench try out this awesome variation. After all, you can't go wrong with old school.

Feet-Up Bench Press

- Three-Week Wave - Go up in weight on each set
(Repeat after three weeks and increase the weight)
- Week 1: 30 reps, 12, reps, 10, reps, 8, 6, 4
- Week 2: 30 res, 8, 6, 4, 2, 1
- Week 3: 6 sets of 5 reps

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