The Truth about Six Pack Abs

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A. PLEASE READ FIRST

Thank you very much for deciding to give this program a shot and improve not only how you look physically, but also how you feel, how much energy you have, and your confidence as well. Rest assured that everything you need to know about getting and staying lean for life is included in this book, without any gimmicky or fad products needed, and virtually no supplements needed either.

Whatever you do, PLEASE have an open mind when going through this book and realize that some of what you are going to read goes directly against a lot of what you hear in the mass media and from many other outlets of fitness information. The problem is that many of these so called "experts" you see in the media and in all the advertisements really know NOTHING about true health/fitness, they are simply trying to force you to buy their latest gimmick or fad product or supplement they are selling.

With this program, we're going to cut right through all of the crap, and give you the straight honest answers about exactly what is needed to get a truly lean and healthy body and keep that for the rest of your life (and of course get those six pack abs that everybody wants!).

Everything you will read in this manual comes from years of sound research as well as hands-on experience with thousands of my clients for both exercise strategies and nutrition strategies. The bottom line is that THIS STUFF WORKS time and time again, as proven by thousands of my customers who write in all the time telling me about the tremendous changes they're seeing in their bodies after adopting my style of training and nutrition.

However, keep in mind that it will only work if you actually **apply the information**!

Man or Woman, Young or Old:

It doesn't matter if you're male or female, old or young… The CONCEPTS I teach in this manual work for anyone and everyone if you apply them. You simply need to adjust things to your level and capabilities. I'll give example routines for all exercise levels from beginner to advanced, and from zero equipment all the way to fully gym equipped.

As a preface for female readers, I'd like to make sure you understand right now that although many of the exercises, training routines, and discussion within this manual may come off in a masculine tone sometimes, it is all equally as effective for body fat reduction and muscle toning for women as it is for men.

Regardless of gender, the best exercises are the best exercises – period! For example, although the barbell deadlift with all of those huge weights on the bar may look intimidating to some beginner male and female trainees, the movement is one of the most functional result producing, body changing movements you will ever learn, regardless of how much weight you can handle currently.

Also, please keep in mind that the abs-specific exercises in this manual are NOT the most important aspect of this program. In reality, the full body workout programs in section 9 of this book are vastly more important to your overall success than just the abs exercises.

In addition, the dietary strategies within this manual work equally well for both genders, as long as total caloric intake is adjusted appropriately. The example meal ideas and portion sizes are just that… examples! You obviously need to adjust portion sizes to your own body weight, age, activity level, etc. If you missed the metabolic rate calculator when you subscribed, it can be found here as the 2nd download:

http://truthaboutabs.com/freebonus

Equipment or no equipment:

One more thing to straighten out before we get started… You don't need lots of equipment to do most of the exercises in this manual. You will get the best results if you have access to a gym or have a fairly well equipped home gym so that you have as much variety as possible available to you. However, you DON'T need any machines!

I'd recommend at the very least, you have access to a stability ball (can get them at any sporting goods store for $20-$30 or at the amazon link I'll give below) and a set of dumbbells. These two things alone will allow you to do almost every single exercise presented in the manual. Don't worry if there are a couple exercises throughout the

manual that you can't do due to lack of a certain piece of equipment… there are dozens of alternatives for everything.

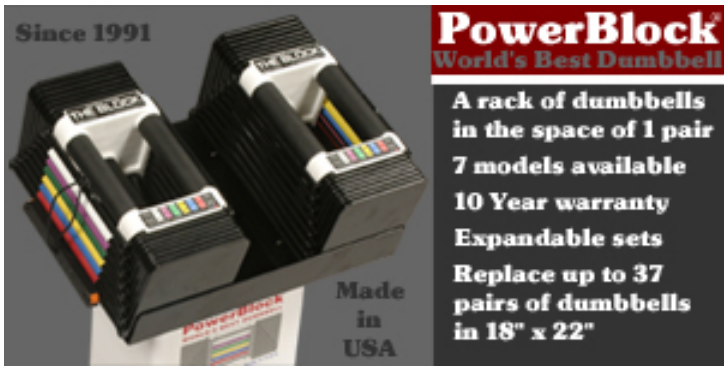
In addition, keep in mind that almost every single barbell exercise presented can be substituted with dumbbells instead, in case dumbbells are all you have available.

If you would rather workout at home instead of joining a gym, I'd recommend you make a small investment in 2 pieces of equipment below. All total, you can get these for only a couple hundred dollars and they will last you for life, so it's a worthy investment.

1. a stability ball
2. a set of adjustable powerblock dumbbells

If you want to set up your own home gym which will last you for life, you can buy your own powerblock dumbbell set at the following website:

Get Powerblock Dumbbells Here



You can also find Amazon.com stability balls at this link

In addition to everything I've mentioned above, make sure you also pay close attention to the nutrition section of this manual. The nutrition section of this book is vitally important to your success. Let me state this loud and clear… if all you focus on is your training, and your diet is full of junk, you WILL NOT see results! You need to apply BOTH the training strategies as well as the nutrition strategies if you want to make this work. The beautiful thing is that once you get this stuff down pat, it actually is quite easy to get as lean as you want and get those abs to show nicely!

Alright, time to get started, and get you on your way to your own set of six pack abs!

1.0 INTRO

Working as a personal trainer/fitness counselor and reading volumes of fitness publications over the years, I've noticed that the majority of fitness related questions that I see and hear most frequently revolve around the abdominals. As the centerpiece of the human physique, the aesthetically pleasing abdominals have become the obsession of most people that are concerned about their physical appearance. However, with modern day culture giving us more opportunities to do less physical work and eat more highly processed super-sized meals with increasing convenience, it has become progressively more difficult and frustrating for the majority of people to obtain anything even closely resembling a six-pack.

To make things worse, we are bombarded by so many "magic pills", ab gadgets, and diets claiming to give you a ripped set of abs that the average consumer can't make heads or tails over what works and what doesn't. Just look at all of the conflicting popular diets on the market today. One claims that a low carb diet is the only way to lose weight, another says low fat is the best, and yet another claims that a vegetarian diet is the only way to go. And as for all of the ab gadgets that unscrupulous marketers are trying to say are the secret to a six pack; well, most of them are flat out worthless junk!

The fact is that most people are looking for that quick fix for which they are not going to have to change anything else in their lives; yet remarkably, that quick fix is going to give them six pack abs overnight. Well, the bad news is that no such thing exists on the market today. The good news is that a tight ripped set of abs is definitely attainable to most people (regardless of genetics) if you follow some sound training advice and follow a healthy diet that promotes body fat loss. I have even seen people who have turned some pretty large beer guts into six packs with some hard work and discipline. It just takes time.

The good news is that healthy eating can actually be enjoyable and doesn't have to feel restrictive. It just takes a little knowledge on choosing the right foods, eating at the right times, and eating the right quantities and proportions. You will actually feel more energized and more productive each and every day by following a balanced diet as I will present

within this book. In addition, your training program doesn't have to feel like a chore. It should be fun and challenge you to improve over time.

I have written this all-encompassing guide to bringing out your hidden set of six-pack abs to once and for all clear up all of the confusion and give every reader a step-by-step guide to follow and a clear understanding of the *truth about six-pack abs*.

Besides the head turning appeal of a great set of abs, a well developed midsection has many other benefits such as supporting a healthy back and improving athletic performance. Body fat reduction has many benefits as well, such as reducing the risk of heart disease, type II diabetes, and many types of cancer. Since the likely reason you picked up this manual has to do with concern over physical appearance, I'll spare you the talk about all of the other health benefits of body fat reduction and abdominal development. All of the health benefits could encompass another entire book.

Before getting into the all the details of this manual, I will say that the most important aspect of life regarding the benefits of fitness, where good health, physical appearance, and the ability to perform physical tasks all come together, is in "quality of life". That's what fitness is really all about. Bear in mind, the reason so few people have a nice set of abs is that it doesn't happen overnight and it's not easy to stay lean in today's culture.

However, with some dietary discipline and an effective training program, it actually becomes quite easy to attain those coveted six-pack abs. So read on, and I guarantee that if you implement the strategic tips I'm going to give you about body fat reduction and abdominal development, you'll be on your way to showing off a ripped set of abs!

2.0 RELATIVE LEANNESS OR BODY FAT %

When people ask me how to go about getting six-pack abs, they usually start talking about all of the crunches and other exercises they spend hours every week performing without seeing any tangible results. My first response is that they most likely already have a reasonably developed set of abdominals if they've been training for some time. Their abs are just covered by excess body fat. That is really what people are inadvertently asking me when they ask what they need to do to get visible abs; what they really need to focus on is reducing their body fat.

Granted, a certain level of muscular development of the abs is necessary to have a ripped "six pack" appearance, but ultimately your body fat % is what's most important. Generally, men need to get below 10-11% body fat to really start to see the abs (they really pop out at 7-8%), and women need to get below 16-19% body fat to really bring out their abs. However, everyone will differ depending on his or her body fat distribution. Based on individual body fat distribution, some people may need to get even leaner than these percentages to be able to see their abs.

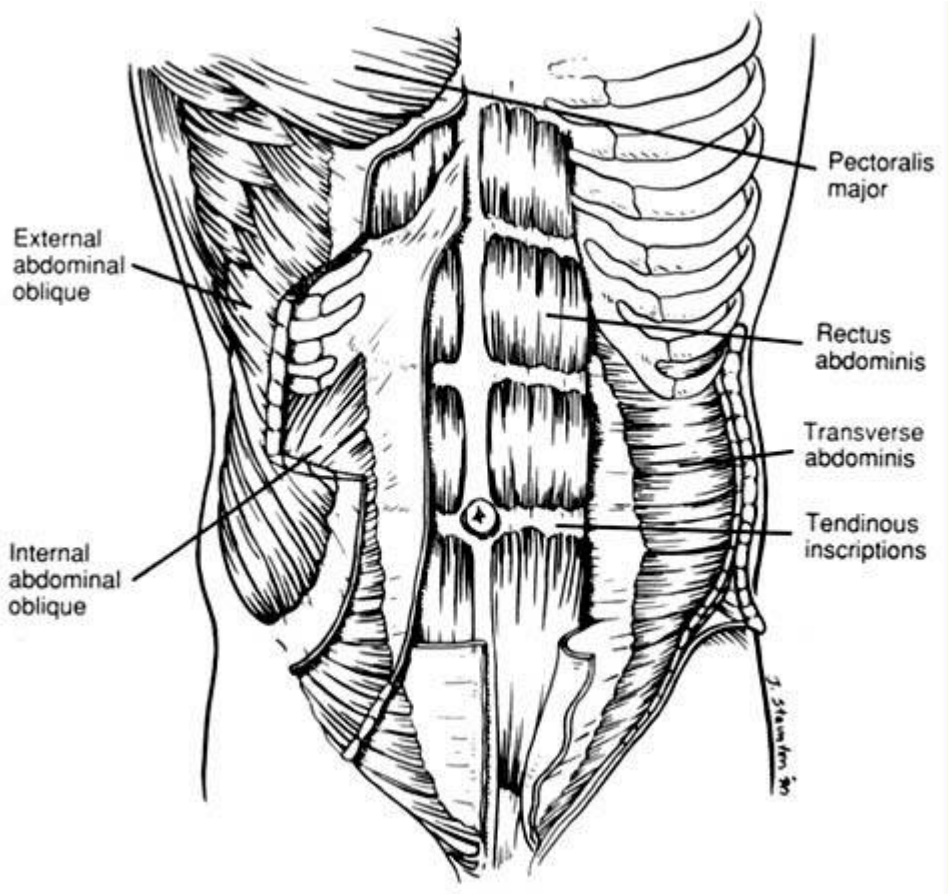
Men tend to accumulate more body fat in the abdominal area, whereas women tend to accumulate more body fat in the hips and thighs. If you want to figure out how much body fat you need to lose to get down to these levels or lower, you'll need to have your body fat percentage measured. There are many methods available to do this, but the methods that will be most accessible to the majority of people are the skinfold caliper method, the bioelectrical impedance method, or estimates using girth measurements of various body part circumferences. If you're a member at a gym, you can most likely have a trainer at the gym perform either the skinfold caliper method or the bioelectrical impedance method. Some of the calculations and tables for the girth measurement method can be found on-line or your trainer at your gym may be able to complete the calculations if they have the tables available.

While this manual will provide all of the information you need to know about developing your abdominals to the greatest extent possible given your genetics, the majority of this manual is going to focus on proven strategies and tips that will help you reduce your bodyfat to such levels that your abdominals are clearly visible.

3.0 SAFE AND EFFECTIVE ABDOMINAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Abdominal Musculature Breakdown and Functions

The abdominals are composed of the rectus abdominis and the lateral abdominal muscles known as the transversus abdominis, and the internal and external obliques. The rectus abdominis runs from your sternum to your pelvis and essentially helps pull your rib cage and your pelvis closer together. The transversus abdominis acts as a natural weight belt essentially holding your insides in, and stabilizing your trunk. The internal and external obliques work to rotate the torso and stabilize the abdomen. The rectus abdominis is the actual visible “six pack” that you see in someone with well-developed abs and a low body fat percentage. However, the lateral abdominal muscles are also very important to develop due to their role in supporting the spine and maintaining a healthy lower back. In addition, developing the transversus abdominis helps pull your stomach area inward giving you the appearance of a smaller waist. Whenever you suck your stomach in (like a guy at the beach trying to hide his gut), you are using the transversus abdominis to perform that movement.



The action of the rectus abdominis can be initiated by crunching the upper body up or by crunching the lower body up. A popular myth is that people think that the upper abs and lower abs can be worked separately. The fact is that you cannot isolate the upper or lower abs. The rectus abdominus is one muscle group and the entire length of the muscle group is activated whether you're pulling the upper body up or pulling the lower body up. With that said, it should be noted that it is beneficial for you to work the abs from a variety of different angles to ensure maximum muscle fiber development throughout the entire abdominal region.

3.2 Proper Body Positioning for Abdominal Training

The hip flexor muscles such as the psoas, along with the abdominals, both act to pull your trunk towards your legs. However, the psoas can operate in a much greater range of motion than the abs. The psoas are activated to the highest degree when your feet are supported and/or your legs are extended straight. Also, the psoas take over the majority of the work when your upper body comes off the floor by more than approximately 30° in crunching or sit-up movements.

It has become fashionable in recent years for trainers to recommend that people try to "isolate" their abs and minimize any hip flexor activity. Although these professionals have good intentions with this recommendation, I don't believe it's a good idea to try to eliminate any kind of hip flexor activity. A balanced approach will be much better. The recommendation to minimize hip flexor activity during ab training stems from the thought that excessive psoas activation during attempts at ab training creates compressive forces on the discs of the lumbar spine. The psoas attach to the lower spinal vertebrae. When the psoas are activated to a high degree, they pull on the lower spine, creating compressive forces on the discs. If your abs are very strong, the abs will keep the back from arching and prevent damage from occurring. However, even those with strong abs may not be able to keep the back from arching once the abs have fatigued. Once the back arches during heavy psoas activity, the vertebrae around the psoas attachment can grind together, potentially resulting in disc degeneration over time.

Now with all of that said, I believe that a balanced approach is best, and that you must focus on building both strong hip flexors and strong abdominals. Strong hip flexors are necessary to improve on movements such as sprinting or any other movements involving hip flexion.

As long as you perform the exercises in this manual with the correct body positioning, you will develop very strong abdominals to protect your back, and you will also develop sufficient hip flexor strength. I do believe that there are certain exercises which are both ineffective and can potentially put undue stress on the lower back. Some of these exercises that I recommend you avoid are straight legged sit-ups, sit-ups with the feet supported, hanging leg raises with an arched back, floor leg raises with straight legs and an arched back, and machine crunches.

Proper body positioning is essential to maximal development of the abs while protecting your back from injury. One of the most important aspects to understand in order to best develop the abs, is to maintain a proper posterior pelvic tilt during ab training. To explain this concept, think of yourself lying on the floor while arching your back. In this position, the top of your pelvis is tilted forward, otherwise known as an anterior pelvic tilt. Now if you rotate the top of your pelvis down towards the floor such that you have removed the arch in your back, you are now in a posterior pelvic tilt. This is the optimal position in which to train your abs when doing floor exercises (although it may not be appropriate for an individual with lower back disc disease).

Now consider an ab exercise in a hanging position, such as the hanging leg raise or hanging knee up. Most people complete these exercises with a slightly arched back position utilizing mostly the hip flexors with minor assistance from the abs to complete this movement. In order to complete a hanging leg or knee raise in a safer and more effective way for developing both the abdominals and the hip flexors, you must have your back in a rounded position as you literally curl your pelvis up closer to your upper body. This aspect makes these exercises much more challenging and puts a much higher demand on your abs. Most people cannot complete a properly performed hanging leg raise until they have adequately strengthened their abdominals and are in very good physical condition.

3.3 Resistance, Frequency, and Duration of Ab Training

One of the reasons that many people who spend a half an hour during each workout doing hundreds of crunches fail to ever develop six pack abs is that after a certain point, regular old crunches just don't provide much resistance to develop your abs. In addition, all of the time wasted doing crunches or other minimally resistive ab exercises (i.e. working a very

small muscle group) could have been better utilized by working larger muscle groups which burn more calories.

By focusing the majority of your time in the gym on bigger compound movements like squats, deadlifts, lunges, and upper body multi-joint presses and pulls, your body is forced to work harder and burn more calories during and after the workout. Don't get me wrong, crunches can have their place in a routine, especially for beginners, and advanced versions of crunches can even be challenging enough for well-trained athletes.

So how long should your ab training take? Well, the good news is that you don't have to spend a half hour or more every day training abs. You can complete an intense ab training session in about 5-10 minutes during your workouts, either at the end or in the beginning of your workout, or on a separate day. I recommend doing your ab training at the end of your workouts to assure that you don't pre-exhaust the abs when you might need their stabilization to protect your back during some of the bigger compound exercises that might make up your workout.

Based on this concept, it is important for the safety of your back not to fatigue your abs before doing heavy spine loading exercises like squats or deadlifts. The problem with saving your ab training for last in your workout is that once you get to that point, you're frequently too fatigued and end up not training abs, or you just work them half hearted. If your workout for the day is mostly comprised of upper body exercises, you can probably get away with doing your ab training first, since you most likely won't need as much stabilization as when doing full body or lower body routines. Another strategy is to save your ab training for a separate day, perhaps combined with a cardio-only day.

Another common misconception with ab training is that many people think they must do it every day in order to obtain ripped abs. In reality, you really should train abs like you would any other muscle group. I recommend inserting a tough 5-10 minute ab routine into your workouts 2-3 times per week. That will be more than sufficient to help you fully develop your abs, without over-training them. Remember, your muscles need enough rest to properly develop. In fact, training your abs more than 2-3 times/week may lead to over-training and bring your progress to a halt.

As I noted earlier, in order to fully develop the abs to their potential, you need to train them with exercises that actually provide significant resistance. While I stated that crunches can be a great ab exercise for beginners, once you've got some ab training under your belt, you'll need to start looking to more resistive exercises to make progress in ab development.

Exercises in which you're curling the lower body up, particularly from a hanging position, provide the most resistance and are much more challenging than curling up the upper body. This is simply due to the fact that your legs are much heavier objects to move than your upper body. Based on this principle, the core of your ab training workouts will consist of exercises that are initiated with your lower body. In any given workout, once you've fatigued the abs with challenging exercises initiated with the lower body, then you can finish off with the easier exercises that are initiated with your upper body.

3.4 Recommended Exercises

There are literally hundreds of different exercises you can do for ab training, and people are always looking for new ab exercises with the thought that you always need to have a new exercise to get continued results. This is not true. You can pretty much keep using the same core of effective exercises, and change the training variables over time to keep progressing. For instance, you can change the order of exercises, the amount of resistance, the volume of work (sets and reps), the rest periods, the rep speed, or even try a different angle of a certain exercise for variety.

Once you've become proficient at all of the exercises in this manual, you'll eventually reach a point where you're probably not going to add any more muscle to your abs (just like you would reach your peak level with any other muscle group), and as long as you've reduced your body fat to a sufficient level, you should be able to visibly see a nice ripped six-pack. That's when things get even easier, because now that you've developed a nice set of abs, all you have to do is maintain them, and maintaining them is easier than building them up in the first place. Once you've reached that point, you can reduce your ab training to once a week just to maintain them. At that point, the only thing that will matter in terms of how your abs look will be whether you maintain a low body fat percentage or not.

I should also note that in order to maintain balanced muscular development in the "core", you must also devote sufficient training to the lower back muscles as well as the abdominals

and hip flexors. You will get plenty of lower back training to balance out the ab training if you follow the exercises presented in section 9, which is full of lower back strengthening exercises such as deadlifts, swings, and snatches.

Listed below are the ab exercises I recommend avoiding because they are either ineffectual or potentially harmful to the back due to excessive psoas recruitment and/or encouraging an arched back:

The Bad Exercises (avoid these)

- Lying straight-legged leg raises (first 45° off of floor, one leg at a time or both)
- Hanging leg raises with an arched back
- Sit-ups with feet supported
- Straight legged sit-ups
- Any machine-based ab exercise
- Any machine-based twisting exercise
- Torso twists (they provide no resistance, nor burn many calories)

Now that we've listed the exercises I recommend avoiding, provided below are the exercises that should be focused on in order to best develop the abs and hip flexors, as they provide the most resistance and encourage proper body positioning:

The Good Exercises (focus on these)

- Hanging leg raises (with hunched back)
- Hanging knee raises (with hunched back)
- Lying leg thrusts (hip thrusts)
- Decline bench leg thrusts (hip thrusts)
- Reverse crunches (crunching hips off floor)
- Ab bicycles (alternating knees to elbows)
- Ab scissors
- Stability ball crunches (weighted for progression)
- Bench crunches
- Alternating (oblique) crunches
- Weighted cable rope crunches (with hunched back)
- Ab wheel

- Stability ball hip flexion (knee tucks)
- Abdominal vacuums (transversus abdominis development)

A Couple Surprisingly Killer Abs & Core Exercises

- Front squats (mostly a leg drill, but requires extreme ab stabilization and strength)
- Renegade dumbbell rows (combines incredible upper body work with amazing oblique and core stability work)

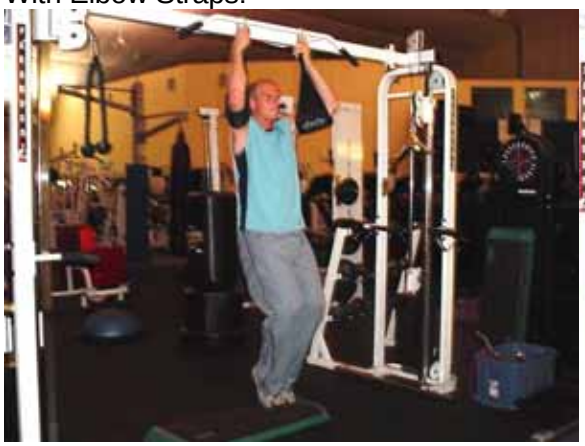
Hanging leg raises

Please note that the majority of people you see in the gyms perform this exercise wrong by using an arched back. Don't copy them! Follow these instructions instead. Yes, doing them correctly will make them much harder, but also more effective. Hang from a pull-up bar with a shoulder width grip. With knees just slightly bent (almost straight), raise your legs up until they almost touch the pull-up bar, while actually curling your pelvis up as well. Your back should round as you curl your pelvis up. Make sure to not perform this exercise with an arched back. The most important point to actually do this exercise correctly, and where most people go wrong with this exercise, is the curling-up action of the pelvis. Without curling the pelvis up while performing this exercise, it uses very little abdominal activity, while focusing almost exclusively on the hip flexors. Done correctly, it will properly strengthen both the abs and hip flexors. If you have shoulder problems or have a weak grip and cannot properly grip the bar for the duration of the exercise, you can use the hanging elbow straps. However, be extra cautious to properly curl your pelvis up during the hanging exercises if using the elbow straps since they tend to promote an arched back. Also, if you wish to greatly increase your grip strength, thereby improving most of your upper body pulling exercises, perform the hanging leg raises without the elbow straps by using the standard hanging grip.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

With Elbow Straps:


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Hanging knee raises

These are identical to the hanging leg raises, except that your knees are fully bent, and you bring your knees all the way up to your chest while curling the pelvis up. This modification from the hanging leg raise basically reduces the amount of weight that you're lifting making the exercise easier. If you cannot yet properly perform a hanging leg raise, this is the best exercise to progress towards that goal. Both hanging leg raises and hanging knee raises can also be done from training rings slung over a power rack or pull-up bar, which makes them even more effective and easier on your shoulders. You can check out training rings at www.ringtraining.com.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

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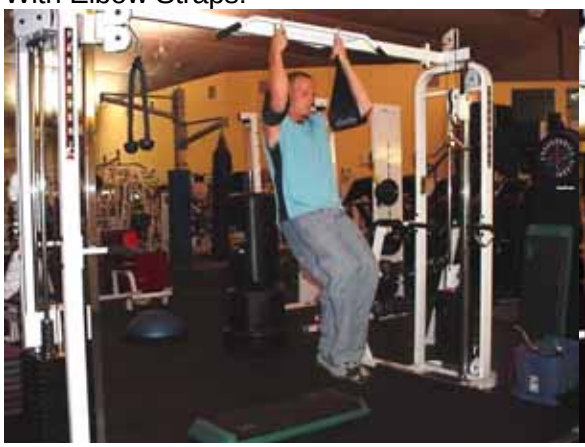
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MIDPOINT

Lying leg thrusts

This is a two part exercise – a “halfway down” leg raise followed by a hip thrust. Start by lying on your back with your head and shoulders raised off of the floor, your hands (palms down) on the mat by your hips, and your legs at a 90° angle from the floor. Slowly lower your legs only half way to the floor to an angle of approximately 45° from the floor. Do not go all the way to the floor with the legs as this promotes an arched back and can put a lot of stress on the lumbar spine. From the 45° position, raise your legs back up to the 90° position. Once the legs are back at the 90° position (no further), thrust your hips off the floor.

START

DOWN HALF WAY

BACK TO START POSITION

THRUST HIPS OFF GROUND

Decline board leg thrusts

This is essentially the same movement as the lying leg thrusts, however, by slightly changing the angle a little closer to vertical, it makes the movement a little more challenging. Just use one of the lower angle settings on the decline board, as that will be sufficient enough to make this exercise more challenging. Again, as with the lying leg thrusts, only lower your legs approximately half way down, before reversing the legs up to a 90° angle at the hips, and finishing with the upward hip thrust. Remember to keep your back from arching during this exercise as well. If you don't have access to a decline board, simply substitute extra sets of lying leg thrusts in place of the decline board leg thrusts into the training program.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Reverse crunches

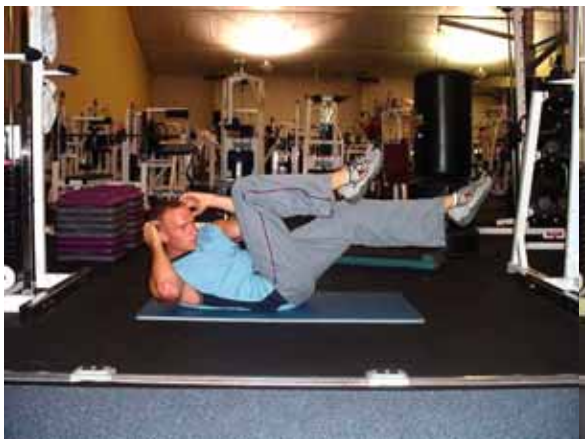
Start by lying on your back on a mat with your feet flat on the floor, your knees at a 90° angle, your palms on the floor by your hips, and your head and shoulders slightly lifted off the ground. Slowly crunch your lower body off the ground by curling your pelvis back toward your head. Do not use momentum. Rather, use your abdominal strength to perform the movement.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Abdominal bicycles

Start by lying on your back on a mat with both your hips and your knees at 90° angles and your head and shoulders slightly lifted off the ground with your fingers touching the sides of your head (not pulling on the back of your head). Perform the movement by crunching the left side of your upper body off the floor and bringing your left elbow and right knee together simultaneously. Then extend your right knee out and bring your right elbow and left knee together simultaneously. This ends up almost mimicking a bicycling movement in a lying position, except keeping your legs moving in and out linearly instead of cyclically.



LEFT ELBOW TO RIGHT KNEE

RIGHT ELBOW TO LEFT KNEE

Abdominal scissors

Start by lying on your back on a mat with both with your arms straight back over your head and your legs straight out at about a 45° angle from vertical. Bring your shoulders off the ground and arms forward while simultaneously bringing your legs and hips up off the ground such that your legs and arms slightly cross over.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Stability ball ab crunches

Stabilize your body on a stability ball by finding your balance point for performing a crunch movement (your lower back will be on the top of the ball). Then simply crunch your upper body up while keeping your fingers on the sides of your head, chin up, and feet planted flat on the floor. To make this exercise more challenging, you will see that my programs progress on this movement as you advance through the levels by incorporating moving your arms straight out behind your head, and then further progressing by holding a weight or medicine ball out behind your head while completing the crunch. The modifications to the crunch add resistance to the exercise making it more effective, since a standard crunch does not provide enough resistance for someone who is past the initial strengthening phases. As a tip to make all of your crunches much more effective, try to hold the top of the crunch for 2 seconds while forcefully exhaling and holding a tight contraction of the abdominals.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Bench crunches

This is still the basic upper body crunching movement; however, your lower legs will be up on a bench with both the knees and hips at 90° angles and your back flat on the mat. With your fingers on the sides of your head, crunch your upper body up bringing your elbows toward your knees. To get the best results, focus on holding the top position of the crunch for two seconds while forcefully exhaling and holding a hard contraction of the abs.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Alternating ab crunches

Lie flat on your back with your feet flat on the floor and your knees bent at about 90°. Place your fingers on the sides of your head and crunch upward and at an angle such that you are pointing your left elbow to your right knee. Then repeat for the opposite side. Again, hold the crunch at the top position for 2 seconds maintaining a hard contraction of the abs. This variation of the crunch involves the obliques more than standard crunches.

START

CRUNCH TO ONE SIDE

BACK TO START POSITION

CRUNCH TO OTHER SIDE

Weighted cable rope crunches

Grasping the high rope attachment at a cable station, start the exercise on your knees a few feet back so that the cable angles toward you instead of running straight down. Keep your hands at the top of your head and crunch down by curling your upper body down and hunching your back. Only crunch down until your elbows are about half of the way to your knees (you don't need to go all the way to the ground). The key to properly performing this exercise is to really focus on curling your upper body down instead of just pulling straight down.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Ab wheel

The ab wheel is a very challenging exercise requiring great strength in the core musculature as well as the arms and lats. With your knees on a mat and the ab wheel just off of the mat, roll out with arms straight in front of you supporting your weight on your knees and the ab wheel. Extend down to a position short of full extension. If done correctly, you should feel a strong contraction in your abs.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Stability ball hip flexion (knee tucks)

Start with your arms in a push-up position and your shins balancing on the top of a stability ball. Tuck your knees in under your body as you roll the ball closer to your hands and elevate your rear. Your back will come up in a hunched position and your abs will contract if done properly.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Front squats

This is a more difficult variation of the barbell back squat which recruits the abdominals to a much higher degree for stability due to the more upright position compared with back squats. It is mostly a lower body exercise, but is great for functionally incorporating core strength and stability into the squatting movement. It is also very hard to learn how to properly rest the bar on your shoulders without pain. There are two ways to rest the bar on the front of the shoulders. In the first method, you step under the bar and cross your forearms into an "X" position while resting the bar on the dimple that is created by the shoulder muscle near the bone keeping your elbows up high so that your arms are parallel to the ground. You then hold the bar in place by pressing the thumb side of your fists against the bar for support. Alternatively, you can hold the bar by placing your palms face up and the bar resting on your fingers against your shoulders. For both methods, your elbows must stay up high to prevent the weight from falling. Find out which bar support method is more comfortable for you. Then, initiate the squat from your hips by sitting back and down keeping the weight on your heels as opposed to the balls of your feet. Squat down to a position where your thighs are approximately parallel to the ground, then press back up to the starting position. Practice first with an un-weighted bar or a relatively light weight to learn the movement. Most people are surprised how hard this exercise works your abs once you learn the correct form. I find that my abs are pretty sore the next day after returning to a cycle of front squats after not doing them for a couple months.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Abdominal vacuums (not pictured)

Ab vacuums will strengthen the transversus abdominis. Besides helping to protect your back by acting as a natural weight belt, they also help to pull your belly in giving you the appearance of a smaller waist. You can do ab vacuums pretty much anywhere at any time. You can do them standing, seated, kneeling in a four-point position, or even lying flat on the floor. The movement is as simple as pulling your belly button in as far as you can by imagining you're trying to touch your belly button to your spine and holding for 10-20 seconds at a time. Start by inhaling deeply. Then, as you exhale, start pulling the belly button in towards the spine and hold it there for 10-20 seconds while just taking short breaths. Repeat for several holds. You can do these at the end of your ab workout while at the gym, but personally I don't like to waste any more time in the gym when you can just practice these in a seated position during the drive home from the gym.

Renegade Dumbbell Rows

Renegade rows are a killer exercise for your entire core! These are one of my secret weapons. Not only do they do an amazing job on your entire upper body, but your abs and entire core area must stay rock hard throughout this exercise in order to do it properly. This is actually a lot harder than it looks.

Start by getting into a pushup position with your hands on two dumbbells. Now start by rowing your right arm up to your side as shown below. Here's the trick… while you row your right arm, keep your left arm rock solid by imagining pressing it into the ground. Return the right dumbbell back to the ground, and then row with your left arm while keeping your right arm rock solid. Feel the amazing tension throughout your entire core area as you try to stabilize your entire body during this exercise!

ROW 1 ARM

ROW THE OTHER ARM

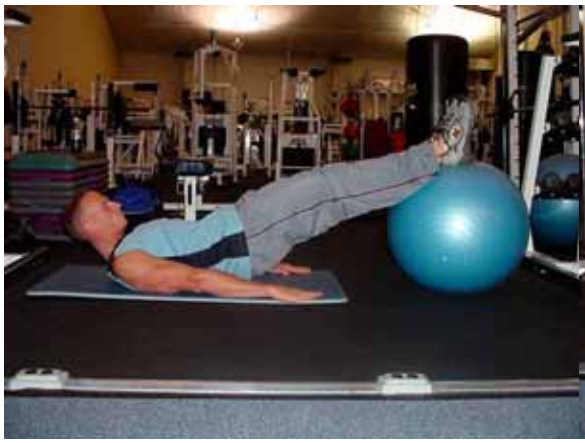
In addition to the abdominal exercises recommended above, I recommend incorporating several general core-strengthening and functional warm-up exercises into your routine such as:

- Straight leg bridge with double leg curl on stability ball
- Straight leg bridge with single leg curl on stability ball
- Mountain Climbers
- Mountain Jumpers
- Opposite raise from four point position
- Opposite raise from push-up position
- Medicine ball or cable lateral chopping on stability ball
- Reverse back/hip extensions on stability ball
- Breakdancers

These core-strengthening exercises are a great addition to your routines as part of a "functional warm-up" in the beginning of your workout instead of or in addition to a traditional brief cardio warm-up.

Straight leg bridge with double leg curl on stability ball

Lie on your back with your feet up on a stability ball and hips on the floor. The bridge is done by simply raising your hips off the floor to bring your body into straight alignment and holding that position. From a bridge position with feet on the stability ball and hips still off of the ground, curl both legs in by rolling the ball closer to your body.

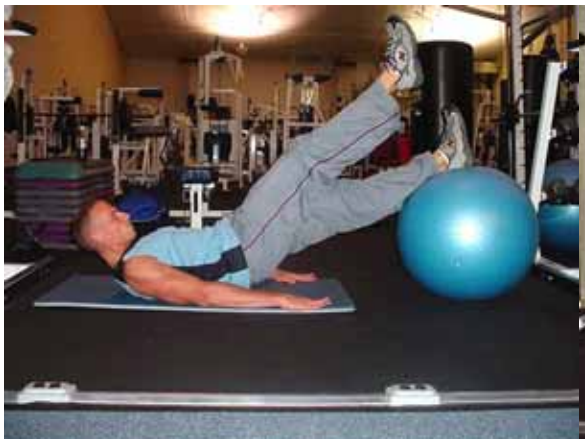


START IN BRIDGE POSITION

LEG CURL WITH HIPS STILL OFF GROUND

Straight leg bridge with single leg curl on stability ball

Lie on your back with your feet up on a stability ball and hips off the floor in a bridge position. From the bridge position with feet on the stability ball, raise one leg 6 inches off the ball and curl the opposite leg in by rolling the ball closer to your body while keeping your hips off the ground. This will be challenging for those with weak hamstrings. Repeat the desired number of reps with the opposite leg.



START IN BRIDGE POSITION

LEG CURL WITH HIPS STILL OFF GROUND

Mountain Climbers

Assume a pushup position on your hands and feet. Quickly bring one leg in so it's under your chest, then immediately pop it back out and bring the other leg in. Keep quickly switching legs so that it looks as if you were climbing a mountain. To make this more challenging, try shifting your arms up and back approximately 12 inches each way while simultaneously switching your legs. If that doesn't make you break a sweat, I don't know what will!

LEFT LEG IN NEAR LEFT HAND

RIGHT LEG IN NEAR RIGHT HAND

Mountain Jumpers

This is similar to the climbers, except that you bring both legs in under your chest at the same time while your arms remain stationary. Then immediately pop both legs back out to the starting position. Keep quickly "jumping" both legs in and out while keeping the arms in place.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Opposite raise from four-point position

Assume a position on your hands and knees. Raise your right arm and left leg out simultaneously and hold for three seconds. Repeat movement with the opposite leg and arm. Alternate reps from side to side.


RAISE RIGHT ARM AND LEFT LEG


RAISE LEFT ARM AND RIGHT LEG

Opposite raise from push-up position

Assume a push-up position on your hands and feet. Raise your right arm and left leg out simultaneously and hold for three seconds. Repeat movement with the opposite leg and arm. Alternate reps from side to side. This exercise takes tremendous balance and core stability. If this is too difficult, perform additional reps from the hands and knees position instead of hands and feet position. Try to improve over time to be able to complete the exercise from the hands and feet position.

RAISE RIGHT ARM AND LEFT LEG

RAISE LEFT ARM AND RIGHT LEG

Medicine ball or cable lateral chopping on stability ball

Sit on a stability ball holding a medicine ball with both arms out to the side of your right leg. Raise the ball at an angle to above your left shoulder. After completing all reps with one side, then switch to the opposite side. A similar exercise can also be completed by pulling a cable from your side at shoulder height while seated on a stability ball. While keeping your arms out straight, rotate your body from side to side. After completing the pulls from one side, then switch and pull from the opposite side.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Reverse back/hip extensions on stability ball

Roll forward face down on a stability ball so the ball is located beneath your pelvis and your upper body and legs make a reverse "V" shape as shown below. Raise your feet off the ground by performing a reverse extension until the body is straight (not hyper-extended). Complete for the prescribed number of reps.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Breakdancers

Get down in a pushup position on hands and feet. Bring your right leg under and over so that your right knee is near your left elbow. Quickly jump and switch to your left knee near your right elbow. Keep jumping and switching back and forth at a rapid pace. People won't know what you're doing and they may give you funny looks thinking that you're trying to breakdance! It's a great exercise though.

LEFT LEG TO THE RIGHT

RIGHT LEG TO THE LEFT

3.5 Ab Training Programs

The ab training programs will only comprise about 5-7 minutes of your total training time on any given day. Also, the ab training component of your workouts should be completed approximately twice/week. Sets and reps are indicated as sets x reps (e.g. 2 sets of 5 reps is indicated as 2 x 5). Keep rest periods between ab training sets to no more than 30 seconds. If you are a beginner, start with level 1. If you already have training experience, but cannot correctly complete hanging leg raises with a hunched back, start with level 3. If you already have significant training experience and can already complete approximately 5 hanging leg raises with strict form using a hunched back, start with level 5. Once you can complete the prescribed sets and reps of each exercise in a given level, progress to the next level. I placed abdominal vacuums at the end of each ab workout. However, since ab vacuums can be completed almost anywhere at any time, I suggest getting in the habit of practicing them on your drive home from the gym, instead of wasting your time completing them while actually at the gym. You could also get in the habit of practicing them during your daily commute or some other time that is convenient to you. I definitely think they are important enough to perform regularly, however, there may be a better time and place rather than during your workouts at the gym.

Level 1
Lying leg thrusts – 2 x 5
Reverse crunches – 2 x 5
Ab bicycles – 1 x 20 (each knee to elbow counts as one rep)
Alternating crunches – 1 x 15
Bench crunches - 1 x15
Abdominal vacuums

Level 2
Lying leg thrusts – 3 x 8
Reverse crunches – 3 x 6
Ab bicycles – 1 x 24
Stability ball crunches – 1 x 10
Alternating crunches - 1 x 18
Bench crunches - 1 x 18
Abdominal vacuums

Level 3
Decline board leg thrusts - 2 x 8
Lying leg thrusts – 2 x 10
Reverse crunches – 1 x 10
Ab scissors – 1 x 8
Stability ball hip flexion – 1 x 12
Ab bicycles – 1 x 30
Stability ball crunches – 1 x 12
Alternating crunches – 1 x 20
Bench crunches 1 x 20
Abdominal vacuums

Level 4
Hanging knee raises – 2 x 8
Decline board leg thrusts – 1 x 10
Lying leg thrusts – 1 x 12
Stability ball hip flexion – 1 x 15
Ab bicycles – 1 x 30
Stability ball crunches with arms straight over head – 1 x 10
Bench crunches – 1 x 20
Alternating crunches 1 x 20
Abdominal vacuums

Level 5
Hanging leg raises – 2 x 5
Hanging knee raises – 2 x 10
Ab wheel – 1 x 6
Decline board leg thrusts – 1 x 12
Lying leg thrusts – 1 x 15
Ab scissors – 1 x 10
Stability ball crunches holding light weight straight over head – 1 x 10
Alternating crunches – 1 x 25
Abdominal vacuums

Level 6
Hanging leg raises – 3 x 6
Hanging knee raises – 3 x 8
Lying leg thrusts – 2 x 15
Ab wheel – 1 x 8
Ab bicycles – 1 x 30
Stability ball crunches holding light weight straight over head – 1 x 12
Stability ball hip flexion – 1 x 15
Abdominal vacuums

Level 7
Hanging leg raises – 4 x 8
Hanging knee raises – 1 x 10
Decline board leg thrusts – 1 x 15
Ab bicycles – 1 x 30
Ab wheel – 1 x 10
Floor crunches holding light weight straight over head – 1 x 15
Weighted cable rope crunches – 1 x 12

Level 8
Hanging leg raises - 4 x 10
Hanging knee raises – 1 x 12
Decline board leg thrusts – 1 x 15
Lying leg thrusts – 1 x 15
Ab scissors – 1 x 20
Stability ball crunches holding light weight straight over head – 1 x 12
Ab wheel – 2 x 10
Ab bicycles – 1 x 30
Alternating ab crunches – 1 x 20
Weighted cable rope crunches – 1 x 15

At this point, if you've worked up to level 8, and can complete all of the prescribed sets and reps in level 8, there is no way that you don't have a well developed set of abs. At this point, if you still can't see a defined six-pack, then your body fat % is still too high, and you must look again at your diet and your full body training routine as a whole.

4.0 LEAN BODY MASS AND METABOLIC RATE

One of the most important yet often overlooked aspects of obtaining low body fat levels is your resting metabolic rate (RMR). Remember, the amount of calories you metabolize on a daily basis is a combination of those consumed to support your RMR, those consumed from your daily activities and exercise, and those consumed from the thermic effect of eating meals. Your RMR accounts for approximately 60-70% of the calories you expend on a daily basis, while your activities account for approximately 20-30%, and the thermic effect of food accounts for approximately 10%.

Now you understand the reason I will place so much importance in this manual on methods to keep your RMR as high as possible. While I don't think you need to obsess over exact amounts of calories you consume, you will need to get a pretty accurate idea of approximately how many calories you consume on a daily basis compared to how many you should consume in order to lose or gain weight. Below, I've provided formulas for you to calculate your approximate daily caloric needs in order for you to have an idea of how many calories you need per day to **maintain** the same weight. You can then adjust appropriately in order to lose weight.

Daily Caloric Needs:

Multiply your calculated RMR (below) by 1.3 (sedentary), 1.4 (moderately active), or 1.5 (very active). If you work out intensely 4-5 days/week or are active in sports or outdoor activities, use 1.5 as the multiplying factor.

RMR expressed in calories (kcal)/day
Height expressed in inches
Weight expressed in pounds
Age expressed in years

For men: RMR = 66 + (12.7 x height) + (6.27 x weight) – (6.8 x age)
For women: RMR = 655 + (4.57 x height) + (4.36 x weight) – (4.7 x age)

Example: A 190-lb male, 6'0" tall, 28 yrs old, very active
Daily caloric requirements for weight maintenance =
1.5 x (66 + (12.7 x 72) + (6.27 x 190) – (6.8 x 28)) = 2972 calories/day

This calculation can be done automatically for you with the metabolic rate calculator you should have already received when you subscribed to my Ezine. If you missed it, you can find it as the 2nd download here: http://truthaboutabs.com/freebonus

Generally, it is considered safe and more effective in the long term to lose only 1-2 lbs per week. If you lose the weight slower, you will generally be able to maintain more muscle. You need to create approximately a 3500-calorie deficit to lose 1 lb. Hence, if the male in the example above would like to lose 1-lb per week, he could reduce his daily caloric intake by about 500 calories/day to around 2472, or any other combination to create a 3500-calorie deficit per week. As you'll see in section 10.5, I recommend a slightly different approach to reach that calorie deficit, which actually involves a day of overfeeding. Yes, you can actually purposely overeat once a week and still get lean! You'll see why later.

Most people with excessive body fat falsely believe that they have been cursed with a slow metabolism and that is the cause for their failed attempts at losing body fat. While it is true that everyone's RMR will vary depending on their genetics, this does not mean that those with seemingly "slower" metabolic rates are doomed to being overweight. In fact, there are many proven ways to boost your RMR, which in turn means that you'll be burning more calories 24/7 (even while sleeping). I'll describe in detail how to increase your RMR in this and subsequent sections of the book.

The amount of lean body mass (muscle, in particular) that you possess directly and positively influences your RMR. The more lean muscle you have, the higher your RMR, and the more calories you burn on a daily basis. This is the reason that weight training will be so important to your efforts for getting lean. The more muscle you develop, the easier it will be for you to lose body fat. The more muscle you lose through excessive dieting or excessive endurance cardiovascular exercise, the lower your RMR will go.

Now when I say that weight training and the amount of lean muscle you possess will be important, I don't mean that you have to be huge like a bodybuilder. In fact, most people have a hard time adding muscle to their frame and will not end up getting too big. Some people seem to have a false impression that if they even touch a dumbbell or barbell, they are going to end up being freakishly huge. One of the reasons that many females sometimes have a hard time reaching their weight loss goals is that they are afraid to lift weights at all or are afraid to lift heavy weights, and consequently they are missing one of the most important tools for getting lean. The point is to make your muscle work for you (even while resting) on a 24/7 basis to get you leaner.

The best way to achieve this is through proper resistance training. Also, it is very rare for females to respond to weight training by gaining excessive muscle mass… women simply don't have the hormonal balance to build too much muscle mass. Most times, as long as the caloric intake is controlled, some of my heaviest lifting female clients are actually some of the leanest and sexiest. So the message to the ladies out there is this… stop being afraid to lift weights… it will NOT "bulk you up"!

On the other hand, if your goal is actually to put on muscle size, there are specific training methods that work better for muscle hypertrophy (mass gain) given your genetic limitations. One program you can check out if you're really interested purely in muscle size is my colleague Sean's website at http://TruthAboutGainingMuscle.com/

However, there are also training methods that simply achieve a strong, toned, well-defined, lean and functional physique, and these methods will be explained throughout this book.

The relationship between your lean body mass and RMR is essentially the reason that I do not recommend fad diets in your attempt to lose body fat. Ultimately, any type of crash diet will lead to a significant loss of lean body mass in addition to any fat loss that you achieve

while on the diet. So when you start to eat somewhat normal again, you have a lower RMR due to the loss of muscle, and you regain fat at an even faster rate now.

This is also why I don't recommend extremely low carbohydrate diets. Generally, low-carb diets are successful for initial weight loss due to controlled eating and reduced blood sugar and insulin levels as well as water weight loss due to depleted muscle glycogen (not a good thing). However, low-carb diets also typically cause a loss of lean muscle and subsequently a decreased RMR, which leads to rapid weight gain once the dieter introduces normal eating back into their life. I'll provide more detail on the importance of your diet in Section 10, and the types of dietary strategies that will promote a lean healthy body.

5.0 METABOLIC EFFECT OF TRAINING

This may sound unusual to some readers, but the reality is that exercises such as squats, deadlifts, lunges, various swings and snatches, presses, pull-ups, etc. are more effective at bringing out your abs than ab-specific training. This is not because they effectively train your abs better than ab-specific exercises (although your abs are involved in stabilizing your body in most of those exercises). The reason they bring out your abs better is due to creating metabolic changes in your entire body that assist in reducing your body fat so you can better see the abs that you have.

5.1 Multi-Joint vs. Single Joint Exercises

Let's start by looking at common weight training exercises broken down into either compound lifts (multi-joint movements) or so called "isolation" lifts (single joint movements). Compound lifts work several large muscle groups at once, whereas isolation lifts generally focus on one particular muscle group to do most of the work. Technically, there is no such thing as an isolation lift, because even most single joint exercises intended to focus on one muscle group will inadvertently get assistance from other muscle groups.

However, the general concept is that you get better overall body responses from multi-joint movements. By working a larger amount of muscle, compound lifts burn more calories, stimulate a greater release of fat-burning and muscle-building hormones, and are also

more useful to everyday activities and sports. Everyday activities and sports rarely replicate single joint movements. In fact, single joint exercises are mostly viewed in athletic training these days to be totally useless or even potentially detrimental for athletes. So if you happen to see a trainer at your gym that is training an athlete with leg extensions, machine leg curls, and other single joint movements, you can pretty much rest assured that they are not a very educated trainer.

Examples of multi-joint movements include squats, deadlifts, lunges, step-ups, swings, snatches, bench presses, incline presses, shoulder presses, seated or bent over rows, lat pulls, pull-ups, chin-ups, dips, push-ups, high pulls, clean and presses, etc. Examples of single joint exercises include barbell or dumbbell curls, triceps extensions or pressdowns, shoulder lateral raises, pectoral flyes, leg extensions, leg curls, etc. While there can be some occasional benefits to single joint exercises (very few), the majority of your routines should be comprised of multi-joint exercises in order to develop a lean, strong, functional body.

5.2 Full Body Training to Get Lean

Let's look at the typical way that many people workout and compare it to a more effective full body approach. In their quest for getting lean, many people will focus a large percentage of their workout on cardio work and then work one or two muscle groups per day for weight training. For example, let's say their workout consisted of a session on one or two pieces of cardio equipment and some weight training exercises for biceps, shoulders, and abs. With this type of workout, they don't get much residual metabolic elevation in the hours and days following their workout as their body does not have to do much work to recover from exercising the relatively small muscle groups of the biceps, shoulders, and abs.

Now let's compare that workout to an intense full body training routine comprised of some multi-joint lower body exercises such as squats and deadlifts combined with multi-joint upper body exercises such as bench presses, pull-ups, and bent over rows, and finished off with a couple challenging ab exercises. This type of workout has stressed pretty much every muscle in your entire body as opposed to just a couple of small muscle groups. This in turn creates a metabolic environment in which your body must do more work (repair more muscle) to recover from the full body workout. Hence, your RMR is increased to a

greater extent and for a longer period of time by doing the full body workout comprised of multi-joint lifts compared to the cardio and single joint exercise based workout.

Studies have shown that intense weight training workouts stressing large muscle groups of the body result in an increased RMR for up to 1-2 days following the workout (potentially even greater than 48 hours), whereas a steady pace cardio workout only elevates your RMR for 1-2 hours following your workout. If you're working out 3-4 times per week utilizing the full-body training style, you're essentially increasing your RMR 24/7. In addition, as mentioned previously, you also get a much better fat-burning and muscle-building hormonal response from your training when you focus mostly on big multi-joint exercises working large portions of the body. The result of all of this is that you get leaner quicker, provided that your diet is in order.

5.3 Quantity of Work Accomplished During Training

Put the "work" back in your workouts! The quantity of work you perform during your training sessions is another concept that is paramount to understanding how to design an effective training program. Pay attention, because along with understanding the concepts of multi-joint exercises and "free" weights, this will probably be the most important concept to understand why you may not be getting the results you want from your workouts.

Work ($W = F \bullet d$) is defined as force (F = the amount of weight moved in any given exercise) multiplied by distance (d = the distance you moved the weight). In general, the more work you perform in a given time period during your workout, the more calories you are going to burn, and the better metabolic response you are going to get from the workout. The amount of work you complete in a given time period essentially determines the intensity of the workout.

To better understand this concept, consider the following examples of work performed during two different workouts. The example weights and distances used are simply for calculation purposes. Each person will have different ranges of motion based on their limb lengths and body size. Even if you do not use weights that are even a fraction of the examples, it's all relative to each individual person. You will get results based on what quantity of work in a given time period is challenging to you personally. You can see that

both workout examples contain four exercises, yet will have vastly different effects on your body and the results you achieve towards becoming leaner and more ripped.

Workout #1 (ineffective; not enough work performed to obtain the best results)
Barbell shoulder shrugs, 315 lbs x 5 sets of 10 reps
Front shoulder barbell raises, 45 lbs x 3 sets of 12 reps
Barbell bicep curls, 95 lbs x 3 sets of 10 reps
Calf machine presses, 300 lbs x 3 sets of 20 reps

Work performed in workout #1
Shoulder shrugs:
distance moved during each rep = 3 inches or 0.25 feet
Work = 315 x 5 x 10 x 0.25 = 3,938 lb•ft
Front shoulder barbell raises:
distance moved during each rep = 2 feet
Work = 45 x 3 x 12 x 2 = 3,240 lb•ft
Barbell bicep curls:
distance moved during each rep = 2 feet
Work = 95 x 3 x 10 x 2 = 5,700 lb•ft
Calf machine presses:
distance moved during each rep = 4 inches or 0.33 feet
Work = 300 x 3 x 20 x 0.33 = 5,940 lb•ft

Total work completed in workout #1: 18,818 lb•ft

Workout #2 (more effective; much more work completed)
Barbell clean & presses, 155 lbs x 5 sets of 4 reps
Barbell back squats, 275 lbs x 5 sets of 5 reps
Weighted pullups, 190-lb bodyweight plus 45 lbs extra x 4 sets of 6 reps
One arm dumbbell snatches, 55 lbs x 4 sets of 6 reps with each arm

Work performed in workout #2
Barbell clean & presses (clean from floor to shoulders, and then press overhead):
distance moved during each rep = 8 feet
Work = 155 x 5 x 4 x 8 = 24,800 lb•ft (This exercise alone accomplished more work than the entire workout #1!)
Barbell back squats:
distance moved during each rep = 2 feet
Work = 275 x 5 x 5 x 2 = 13,750 lb•ft
Weighted pullups:
distance moved during each rep = 2 feet
Work = 235 x 4 x 6 x 2 = 11,280 lb•ft
One arm dumbbell snatches (snatch from floor to overhead):
distance moved during each rep = 8 feet
Work = 55 x 4 x 6 x 8 x 2 (both arms) = 21,120 lb•ft

Total work completed in workout #2: 70,950 lb•ft

As you can see, with workout #2 you will complete almost four times as much work as workout #1 in approximately the same time period. This means the intensity of workout #2 will be much higher, you will burn A LOT more calories, you will get a better hormonal response, and ultimately you will get a much greater increase in metabolic rate for the hours and days following this workout compared to workout #1. Take note that workout #1 is comprised of solely single joint movements, while workout #2 is comprised of multi-joint movements. Notice that although you can handle pretty decent quantities of weight in the shoulder shrugs and calf presses examples, the movement distance is so short that the quantity of work you perform is minimal compared to the multi-joint lifts in workout #2.

Also, even though the other two example single joint movements (front barbell shoulder raises and barbell bicep curls) in workout #1 allow you to move the weight for a greater distance, the quantity of weight you can handle in these exercises is much lower, which again leads to a minimal accumulation of work compared to the multi-joint movements in workout #2. If your goal is to get lean and ripped, then don't waste your precious time that you are devoting to the gym performing single joint exercises that equate to low total "work" volumes (i.e. low intensity workouts), when your time could be much better spent by performing high "work" volume multi-joint exercises.

So the general concept to retain from these examples is that in order to get the best results you should focus most of your time training with exercises that you can move greater amounts of weight for larger distances. Higher range of motion exercises such as clean & presses or one-arm snatches in which you move a weight from the floor to an overhead position obviously force you to perform the largest quantity of work of all exercises due to the great distances moved. Also, combination moves like dumbbell squat & presses force you to perform a great quantity of work, burn the most calories, and work most of the muscle groups in your body all at once creating a metabolic environment that stimulates change.

In summary, one of the points I'd like to make in this section is to not devote all of your time to ab training in your quest to get leaner and better looking abs. Instead, to get much better results faster, devote the majority of your time to multi-joint exercises that work a larger quantity of muscle (larger portions of your body and larger muscle groups) than ab-specific training. I'll expand upon the cardio discussion in section 7. Also, I'll explain in

section 9 how to compile workouts that stress the greatest amount of muscle groups in your body without too much overlap on successive workouts.

6.0 FREE WEIGHTS VERSUS MACHINES

Another important aspect of your training routine that should be stressed is that the majority of your resistance training should be comprised of free weights (dumbbells, barbells, and other "free" weighted objects) as opposed to machines. The reason machines take up so much space in today's gyms is that they give the place a clean, modern, technologically advanced look; so people think that the gym is "better". The reality is that machines are far less effective for getting results than good old-fashioned free weights. To keep your workouts interesting, realize that your free weights don't always have to be dumbbells or barbells. Some of the most intense, functional, result producing workouts can be done with kettlebells, sandbags, logs, boulders, etc. Use your creativity and you'll be rewarded with results! If you're looking for some creative ways to use odd objects and other hard-core methods to do your strength training, then you should check out the Underground Strength Coach site.

Free weights allow you to follow your body's natural line of motion and require that you stabilize the weight, whereas machines stabilize the weight for you and restrict you to a fixed path of motion. Essentially, machines are doing a portion of the work for you making your workout less effective. In addition, an over-reliance on machines for your weight training can make you prone to injury in the long run due to neglecting your important stabilizer muscles. Take for example a free weight barbell squat versus a Smith machine squat. During the free weight barbell squat, your core musculature must provide significant stabilization of your body (especially in a front squat or overhead squat). Now contrast that with doing squats in the Smith machine where the weight is already stabilized for you taking away any core strengthening benefits and also putting you in a fixed up and down path which is not the natural path your body should take, thus placing your spine in a potentially dangerous position.

This concept of free-weight training goes for everything, including ab training. Bottom line – if you want better results from your workouts, stick to free weights for the majority of your routines. I will admit that I'm not 100% anti-machines. I think certain select machines can be incorporated at times and benefit your training. One idea you can use to break out of a

training plateau is actually to use a 2 or 3 week cycle of using almost all machines, and then return to a free weight based program after that for the majority of your time. If you really like certain machines and don't want to give them up, at least always make sure that free weights make up at least 90% of your exercises. When I say machines, I mean something that's locked into a fixed path. Take note that I don't consider cable exercises as machines. Therefore, cable exercises such as lat pulldowns, horizontal rows, or cable bench presses from a stability ball can all be beneficial.

While on the topic of core stabilization, I want to emphasize to any misinformed fitness enthusiasts that a weight belt should not be worn at any time during any of your weight training routines (unless you're performing a max or near-max lift in one of the spine loading lifts such as squats or deadlifts). The theory behind a weight belt is that it pulls in on your abdominal wall to aid in supporting your spine during a very heavy lift. The problem is that if you use a weight belt all the time, you actually weaken your core musculature since you take away the work that they are intended to perform. Hence, you could set yourself up for a back injury in the future. You don't know how many times I see misinformed guys walking around the gym for their entire workout wearing a lifting belt. Poor souls! Bottom line – don't use a lifting belt unless you're a competitive power lifter performing max or near-max squats or deadlifts. You're actually doing more harm than good if you use it for anything other than that.

7.0 THE PROBLEM WITH CARDIO, AND MY SOLUTION

Yes, believe it or not, all of those hours upon boring hours of repetitive low to moderate intensity cardio training sessions are not the best way to lose body fat and reveal your abs. Many trainers and the media seem obsessed with the thinking that the best and only way to lose body fat is through long boring cardio routines. Well, I'm here to tell you that they couldn't be more wrong!

Look around and you'll see people all the time laboriously pumping away on some cardio machine day after day wondering why they can't lose any more body fat. While it is true that aerobic training (cardio) does burn a higher percentage of fat during the actual exercising than anaerobic training such as wind sprints or weight training (which rely more heavily on carbs for energy), this does not mean that aerobic training will promote a leaner body than anaerobic training. The reason for this relates to the important aspects of your

overall RMR, the quantity of lean body mass you possess, the hormonal response from the exercise stimulus, and the residual metabolic effect of your training session in the hours and days following your workout.

First, as previously stated, your RMR remains elevated for only 1-2 hours following a typical cardio workout. Conversely, your RMR remains elevated for up to 1-2 days following a strenuous anaerobic training session (weight training, sprints, and other high intensity exercises) in which a large quantity of your skeletal muscle has been traumatized. This trauma created in your muscles during anaerobic training is the process of muscle protein breakdown. Then, in the hours and days following that anaerobic training session, your body must repair the damaged muscle. This is called muscle protein synthesis. During this whole process, your RMR is elevated due to the repair work your body is performing. Hence, you end up burning a lot more additional calories from this residual RMR increase than you would have from the cardio training session. In the long run, this aspect is more important towards creating a lean body than those few extra fat calories that you would have burned during a cardio workout.

Second, as simple as this fact sounds, it is most often overlooked in people trying to lose weight who think that they have to focus on cardio to lose the weight. Weight training builds lean muscle mass and therefore increases your RMR. Excessive cardio training actually can cause a loss of lean muscle mass, therefore decreasing your RMR. Hence, the lower your RMR, the harder it's going to be to lose any more body fat and easier to store body fat if you happen to overeat. The result is that people who use primarily cardio-based workouts and also have a poor diet frequently acquire that "skinny-fat" appearance where they have very little muscle definition coupled with excess body fat.

It is common to hear fitness professionals and medical doctors prescribe low to moderate intensity aerobic training (cardio) to people who are trying to prevent heart disease or lose weight. Most often, the recommendations constitute something along the lines of "perform 30-60 minutes of steady pace cardio 3-5 times per week maintaining your heart rate at a moderate level". Before you just give in to this popular belief and become the "hamster on the wheel" doing endless hours of boring cardio, I'd like you to consider some recent scientific research that indicates that steady pace endurance cardio work may not be all it's cracked up to be.

First, realize that our bodies are designed to perform physical activity in bursts of exertion followed by recovery, or stop-and-go movement instead of steady state movement. Recent research is suggesting that physical variability is one of the most important aspects to consider in your training. This tendency can be seen throughout nature as all animals demonstrate stop-and-go motion instead of steady state motion. In fact, humans are the only creatures in nature that attempt to do "endurance" type physical activities.

Most competitive sports (with the exception of endurance running or cycling) are also based on stop-and-go movement or short bursts of exertion followed by recovery. To examine an example of the different effects of endurance or steady state training versus stop-and-go training, consider the physiques of marathoners versus sprinters. Most sprinters carry a physique that is very lean, muscular, and powerful looking, while the typical dedicated marathoner is more often emaciated and sickly looking. Now which would you rather resemble?

Another factor to keep in mind regarding the benefits of physical variability is the internal effect of various forms of exercise on our body. Scientists have known that excessive steady state endurance exercise (different for everyone, but sometimes defined as greater than 60 minutes per session, most days of the week) increases free radical production in the body, can degenerate joints, reduces immune function, causes muscle wasting, and can cause a pro-inflammatory response in the body that can potentially lead to chronic diseases.

On the other hand, highly variable intensity training has been linked to increased anti-oxidant production in the body and an anti-inflammatory response, a more efficient nitric oxide response (which can encourage a healthy cardiovascular system), and an increased metabolic rate response (which can assist with weight loss). Furthermore, steady state endurance training only trains the heart at one specific heart rate range and doesn't train it to respond to various every day stressors. On the other hand, highly variable intensity training teaches the heart to respond to and recovery from a variety of demands making it less likely to fail when you need it.

The important aspect of variable intensity training that makes it superior over steady state cardio is the recovery period in between bursts of exertion. That recovery period is crucially important for the body to elicit a healthy response to an exercise stimulus.

Another benefit of variable intensity training is that it is much more interesting and has lower drop-out rates than long boring steady state cardio programs.

To summarize, some of the potential benefits of variable intensity training compared to steady state endurance training are as follows: improved cardiovascular health, increased anti-oxidant protection, improved immune function, reduced risk for joint wear and tear, reduced muscle wasting, increased residual metabolic rate following exercise, and an increased capacity for the heart to handle life's every day stressors. There are many ways you can reap the benefits of stop-and-go or variable intensity physical training. Wind sprints or hill sprints are the ultimate in variable intensity training and will get you ripped and muscular in no time flat. If you're in good enough shape to sprint, always sprint instead of jogging. Trust me…your body will look much better for it! For a great finish to your weight training workouts, or for a great workout on their own, try about 6-12 all-out sprints of about 50-100 yards with 30-90 seconds rest in between.

Another great method of incorporating highly variable intensity exercise is to play sports. Most competitive sports such as football, basketball, racquetball, tennis, hockey, etc. are naturally comprised of highly variable stop-and-go motion. In addition, weight training naturally incorporates short bursts of exertion followed by recovery periods. High intensity interval training (varying between high and low intensity intervals on any piece of cardio equipment) is yet another training method that utilizes exertion and recovery periods. For example, an interval training session on the treadmill could look something like this (caution - this may be too fast for shorter individuals or if you're not yet in good shape; adjust appropriately):

- Warm-up for 3-4 minutes at a fast walk or light jog
- Interval 1 - run at 8.0 mi/hr for 1 minute
- Interval 2 - walk at 4.0 mi/hr for 1.5 minutes
- Interval 3 - run at 10.0 mi/hr for 1 minute
- Interval 4 - walk at 4.0 mi/hr for 1.5 minutes
- Repeat those 4 intervals 4 times for a very intense 20-minute workout.

Hopefully this section has convinced you to focus the majority of your training on weight training and other forms of resistance training coupled with high intensity "interval type cardio" and/or sprints in your quest for losing body fat to uncover your abs. I also

recommend mixing in high intensity type training such as jumping rope, boxing, a rowing machine, stair climbing, and hill running into your routine in your quest to get lean. I guarantee you that a 20-minute high intensity interval training session is much more effective than a 40-50 minute boring steady pace cardio session due to several factors discussed previously such as the residual metabolic after-burn effect, muscle retention, hormonal response, heart rate variability, etc. It will also save you time!

Another incredible interval style workout that really stimulates the fat burning hormonal response in the body is hill sprinting. If you have any type of hill near your house this workout is as simple as running as fast as you can up the hill for about 30 yards (or however big the hill is), and then walk down the hill as your recovery interval. Keep repeating sprinting up the hill with walking down the hill. About 10-15 minutes of that is VERY intense and usually enough of a workout for most people. If you have any kind of hill (perhaps at a park or even just a hilly road) near you, consider incorporating hill sprints a couple times a week into your workout routines and I guarantee you'll see a leaner body within weeks!

8.0 FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF TRAINING SESSIONS

Many people falsely believe that you must workout everyday or at least 5-6 days/week to build a lean ripped physique. In fact, for most people, training that frequently will lead to over-training. Your body needs a stimulus (exercise) in order to build muscle and lose body fat. However, your body also needs sufficient rest to recover from that exercise. Therefore, training everyday doesn't give the body much time to rebuild and get ready for the next training session. On the other hand, if you only train one day per week, you're doing little more than a sedentary individual.

So, what is an optimal training frequency for most people to obtain the best results? There's not one single answer since everyone is different. It also depends on how you structure your sessions. However, most people respond best to training 3-4 days/week. That allows sufficient training stimuli to force your body to adapt, yet also allows sufficient rest to prevent you from getting "burned out" or overtraining.

As for the duration of your individual training sessions, once again many people falsely believe they must train for 2-3 hours each day in order to get lean. However, there are

very few people who can train this long without over-training and doing more harm than good. Most individuals will get better results by making their workouts shorter yet more intense. A good rule of thumb is to keep your workouts between 45-60 minutes. Studies have shown that training sessions exceeding one hour promote higher levels of the catabolic hormone cortisol which can lead to excessive muscle protein breakdown. It's very hard for your body to fully recover once you've over-trained. Think of it as taking two steps back, but only one step forward.

In summary, the majority of people respond best to training 3-4 times/week for 45-60 minutes/session. However, don't be afraid to experiment with different intensities and durations. For example, if your results have come to a halt, you could try a super high intensity 20-minute workout (with almost no rest periods between sets) performed four or five times/week instead of your usual 60-minute workout performed three times/week. That type of change to your training routine may be just what the doctor ordered to break out of your plateau.

9.0 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER INTO AN EFFECTIVE TRAINING ROUTINE

So let's review all of the important concepts to take into account in order to design a highly effective training program that will promote a lean ripped body. In no particular order, the most important factors that go into an effective routine are:

- Focus the majority of your time on weight training to get lean instead of focusing on cardio training;
- Replace traditional moderate intensity long duration cardio with high intensity shorter duration anaerobic training such as wind sprints and interval training;
- Utilize multi-joint exercises instead of single joint exercises for the majority (if not all) of your training routines;
- Focus on free weights instead of machines for the majority (if not all) of your training;
- Increase the intensity of your workouts by focusing on exercises in which you complete more "work" by moving significant quantities of weight for larger distances (e.g. barbell clean & presses or one arm snatches constitute much greater quantities of work than shoulder shrugs or calf presses);

- Keep your workouts shorter but intense; your best results will most likely come from keeping your workouts between 30-60 minutes in length without exceeding approximately one hour to reduce catabolism;
- A training frequency of 3-4 sessions per week works best for the majority of individuals;
- Ab specific training should generally be completed at the end of your workout or on a separate day from your full body training;
- Ab specific training never needs to comprise more than 5-7 minutes of your total 30-60 minute training session;
- Ab specific exercises should provide significant resistance to challenge your strength level (e.g. 10 properly executed hanging leg raises are much more effective than 100 crunches);
- An arched back should be avoided during ab training while generally focusing on maintaining a hunched back during most ab exercises;
- Perform a functional warm-up at the beginning of each workout utilizing core strengthening exercises to warm up your body along with a brief bicycling warm-up to lubricate the lower body joints;
- Follow a specific type of training program consistently for 4-6 weeks before changing your training variables; continue your progression by changing one or more of the important training variables after 4-6 weeks of consistency.

There are literally endless ways to put all of these essential factors together into an effective training program. I will present several different examples below after the exercise descriptions (one beginner example and several intermediate/advanced examples). Sets and reps of each exercise will be indicated as sets x reps (e.g. 4 sets of 6 reps are indicated as 4 x 6, whereas 6 sets of 4 reps are indicated as 6 x 4). A superset means that you complete one set of the first exercise, followed by one set of the second exercise after minimal rest. Then rest 1-2 minutes before completing the next set of the superset. Also, take note that the sets and reps listed in all of the routines are for the work sets only.

You should also complete a couple warm-up sets of each exercise before starting the work sets. A good rule to follow is to do a warm-up set with 50% of what your working weight is going to be and then a second warm-up set with 75% of your working weight. Keep the reps low (around 4-5 reps) for each of the warm-up sets, as you don't want to fatigue the

muscles, you only want to prepare them for the heavier weight. The weight used on your work sets should be heavy enough to really challenge you for the prescribed number of reps.

As I've said before, in order to get really lean, you'll want to focus the majority of your work on multi-joint free weight exercises. The following exercises on the next page are the most effective multi-joint free weight exercises that should make up the majority of your routines:

- Standard barbell deadlifts
- Romanian deadlifts
- Barbell back squats
- Barbell front squats
- Barbell overhead squats
- Dumbbell lunges (walking or standing)
- Dumbbell step-ups
- Barbell clean & presses
- One arm snatches
- One arm swings
- Two arm swings
- Barbell high pulls
- Barbell or dumbbell incline or flat bench presses
- Dips
- Push-ups variations
- Pronated grip pull-ups
- Supinated grip chin-ups
- Lat pulldowns (supinated, pronated, or neutral grips)
- Barbell bent over rows
- One arm dumbbell rows
- Renegade dumbbell rows
- Seated horizontal cable rows
- Overhead barbell or dumbbell presses
- Dumbbell squat & presses

9.1 The Exercises Detailed

Standard barbell deadlifts

This is the single most functional lift you can perform to improve your performance in everyday tasks and/or sports. Any time you have to lift something heavy off of the floor in life, you are essentially performing a deadlift. Deadlifts work such a large amount of your body's musculature; it is easy to see why this lift will have a huge impact on your overall body strength and ability to get lean. First, load a barbell and roll it up to your shins with your feet shoulder width apart. Grab the bar with an overhand grip (alternating grip when you get into heavier weights) and your arms just outside of your knees. Squat down and sit back as if in the bottom of a squat position and keep your eyes fixed straight ahead (don't look down while doing this lift). Keep your back flat (not rounded) and shoulders pulled back. Keeping the bar close to your shins and tension in the bar with straight arms, initiate the lift by straightening your legs and standing up. Finish the movement with an upright posture keeping your back flat and shoulder blades back with your trapezius muscles contracted. As with the squat, you should feel the weight more on your heels rather than on the balls of your feet. Lower the bar back to the floor by squatting down keeping the bar close to your body once again. Pause at the bottom before starting the next rep. Never bounce the weight off the floor while doing deadlifts. Contrary to popular belief, deadlifts will not hurt your back if done properly. Actually, they effectively strengthen your back so that you're less prone to back injury in the future. A great variation of the standard deadlift is called the sumo deadlift. In the sumo deadlift, you take a very wide stance with toes pointed slightly out, and your hands grip the bar on the inside of your legs instead of the outside.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Romanian deadlifts

This exercise is one of the best and most functional hamstring strengthening exercises. Romanian deadlifts also work a large amount of musculature, although not as much as the standard deadlift. Stand holding a barbell with a wide grip (alternating grip once you get into heavy weights) and feet shoulder width apart. Lower the bar keeping it close to your body and maintaining a slight bend in your knees. Do not do this exercise with fully straight legs! That is one of the most common mistakes. That is why I don't call this exercise "straight-legged" deadlifts like some people do – to make it clear that you are supposed to have a very slight bend in your knees. As with the standard deadlift, maintain a flat back throughout and keep the shoulder blades pulled back and chest out. Do not let your back round during this exercise. Think of pushing your hips back during this exercise instead of just bending over. Go down to a position where your back is about parallel to the ground (although everyone will differ based on their flexibility) and you feel a stretch in your hamstrings. Then reverse the movement by contracting your glutes and pushing your hips forward to get back to the starting position. For Romanian deadlifts, you will probably be able to use 80-90% of the weight you would use on standard deadlifts. Romanian deadlifts are very important for increasing the strength needed during sprinting, so if you're an athlete that needs sprint speed, these will be one of the best for your improvement.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Barbell back squats

As with the deadlift, the squat is at the very top of the heap in terms of building a strong, muscular, lean, and functional body. The squat and the deadlift work more muscle groups than most other exercises out there, and deliver whole body results like no other exercises. If you want to get strong and lean, the squat and/or the deadlift must be part of the foundation of your routines. Another benefit of squats and deadlifts is that they are known to produce greater growth hormone and testosterone releases than any other exercises due to the huge quantity of muscle that they use. In a squat rack or power rack, step under a barbell grabbing it overhand just outside your shoulders and rest it on your upper back (below your neck) with your shoulder blades pulled back to contract your trapezius muscles. Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder width. Keep your eyes fixed straight ahead and back slightly arched. Squat down by sitting back and also bending forward slightly to counterbalance the weight (your knees and hips bend simultaneously). Come down to a position where your thighs are approximately parallel to the ground, and then press back up to the starting position following the same movement pattern. Again, you should feel most of the weight on your heels, not the balls of your feet. This is essential for proper knee health and functioning. Also, do not lock out your knees at the top. Contrary to popular belief, properly done squats actually strengthen the knee joint. It is when squats are done improperly that they lead to knee problems.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Barbell front squats

This is a more difficult variation of the barbell back squat which recruits the abdominals to a much higher degree for stability due to the more upright position compared with back squats. It is mostly a lower body exercise, but is great for functionally incorporating core strength and stability into the squatting movement. It is also very hard to learn how to properly rest the bar on your shoulders without pain. There are two ways to rest the bar on the front of the shoulders. In the first method, you step under the bar and cross your forearms into an "X" position while resting the bar on the dimple that is created by the shoulder muscle near the bone keeping your elbows up high so that your arms are parallel to the ground. You then hold the bar in place by pressing the thumb side of your fists against the bar for support. Alternatively, you can hold the bar by placing your palms face up and the bar resting on your fingers against your shoulders. For both methods, your elbows must stay up high to prevent the weight from falling. Find out which bar support method is more comfortable for you. Then, initiate the squat from your hips by sitting back and down keeping the weight on your heels as opposed to the balls of your feet. Squat down to a position where your thighs are approximately parallel to the ground, then press back up to the starting position. Practice first with an un-weighted bar or a relatively light weight to learn the movement. Most people are surprised how hard this exercise works your abs once you learn the correct form. I find that my abs are pretty sore the next day after returning to a cycle of front squats after not doing them for a couple months.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Barbell overhead squats

The overhead (OH) squat is the most difficult of the three basic squats…by far! It took me several weeks to become comfortable with OH squats, and that was practicing with the empty bar. I know 300-lb back squatters who can't even OH squat an empty bar. It just takes a little time to learn how to use your core musculature to stabilize the weight over your head. I recommend females start learning this exercise with one of the 12 or 15-lb "body bars" and males can start learning with an empty 45-lb Olympic bar. To start, you first need to get the weight from the floor to a position locked out over your head and your hands in a wide "snatch" grip (wider than the rings on an Olympic bar). You can either snatch it there for lighter weight, or when you get good at these and are using heavier weights, you can clean and press it overhead and then move your hands into a wide snatch grip. Before beginning the squat descent, lock your arms out really tight and position the weight towards the back of your head. Your entire body must remain tensed hard throughout the squat or the weight will fall forward or back. You'll see what I mean when you try it! As with all other squats, keep the head up, weight on heels, and sit back into the squat. When you get down to the point where your thighs are parallel with the ground, press back up to the starting position.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Dumbbell lunges (walking or standing)

Stand holding two dumbbells at arms length and lunge forward until your thigh is approximately parallel to the ground. Make sure to take a long enough stride so that your knee does not extend past your toes and your shin is nearly vertical (for knee safety and proper functioning). Step back to the starting position if performing the standing lunge. You can also perform reverse lunges by stepping backward instead of forward. You can also do a walking lunge, where you move directly from the bottom position of the first leg into the bottom position of the second leg, essentially lunge walking for a distance that challenges you. You can increase the distance lunged over time for progression or keep the distance the same and increase the sets or weight carried.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Dumbbell step-ups

Stand in front of a step, box, or bench approximately 15 inches high while holding two dumbbells at arms length. Step up with the right leg, and then up with the left leg. Then reverse the movement by stepping down with the left leg first and then the right leg last. Perform all reps with the right leg before switching and completing the same number of reps with the left leg. Lunges and step-ups also produce great whole body changes due to the tension on the upper body and lower body simultaneously working a large amount of full body muscle.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Barbell high pulls

This exercise basically combines an explosive style deadlift with an upright row. Once again, begin in the deadlift starting position. As with the deadlift, keep the head up, back flat, weight on the heels, and lift the weight up explosively all the way from the floor to your shoulders keeping the elbows up high. You do not flip the bar over and catch it at the shoulders as with the clean & press; you just bring the bar up explosively to below the chin and back down to your thighs, **THEN** lower the weight to the floor (up in one motion, down in two). This is another exercise commonly used in athletic training to develop explosive power. **Please note:** For those that don't have a barbell accessible… as with most other barbell exercises, this can easily be done in the same form with dumbbells, and is equally effective for full body work.

START/FINISH

TOP POSITION

Barbell or dumbbell incline or flat bench presses

Lie on a flat or incline bench with a slightly wider than shoulder width grip. Lower the weight slowly to your chest and press back to arms length. If using a “close grip” to shift more of the emphasis to your triceps, bring your grip one hand length closer together and keep your elbows closer to your body throughout the lift. For variety, dumbbells can be utilized during different training periods. Also, dumbbell presses can be performed on a stability ball either unilaterally (one arm at a time) or bilaterally (both arms at the same time) to increase the recruitment of stabilizer muscles and core musculature. This increases the difficulty of dumbbell presses, so go lighter than you would with a bench.

Incline dumbbell presses:


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Flat barbell bench presses:


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Dips

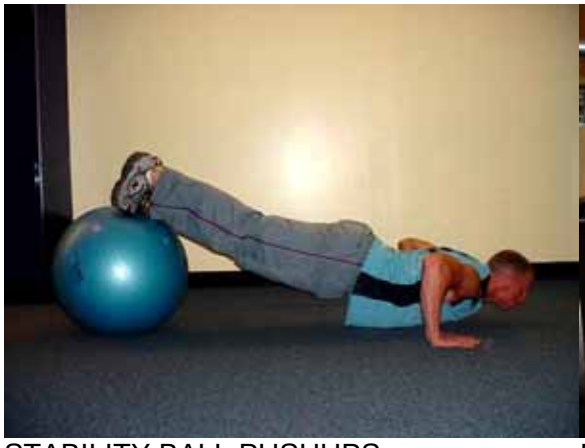
On a dip bar, lower your body such that your upper arms come down to a position parallel to the ground, then press back up to top position using your triceps, shoulders, and chest strength. As pictured below, you can add weight to a chain attached to a belt in order to increase the quantity of weight lifted. You could also have a spotter place a dumbbell between your calves or ankles to add weight. You should be able to perform at least 12-15 reps with good form for bodyweight dips before progressing to weighted dips. To make dips even more difficult, result producing, easier on your shoulder joints, and also involving more stability, they can be performed from hanging training rings. Check out the training rings at www.ringtraining.com


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Push-ups variations

Due to the relative ease of push-ups, try variations to make them harder such as push-ups with your feet elevated on a bench, hands positioned on a barbell, feet elevated on a stability ball, hands on a stability ball, hands on two rubber medicine balls, clapping (ballistic) push-ups, fingertip pushups, pushups with weighted backpack, etc. Pushups work the same muscle groups as bench pressing exercises, but with extra stability required of your core musculature. The two variations of pushups pictured below are more advanced versions requiring additional core stabilization. Another variation that makes pushups a lot harder and more functional is performing them from training rings as shown at www.ringtraining.com.


STABILITY BALL PUSHUPS


BARBELL PUSHUPS

Pronated grip pull-ups

Take a slightly wider than shoulder width grip and perform pull-ups from a full dead hang position all the way up until your chin clears the bar, then lower slowly all the way back down to a full hang position. Make sure you go all the way back down to a full hang between each rep instead of the half pull-ups that you see many people doing. If you can complete the prescribed number of reps in a given training program easily, then you need to progress by hanging weight from a chain around your waist (pictured below) or holding a dumbbell between your ankles.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Supinated grip chin-ups

With your palms facing you, take a grip at approximately shoulder width, and perform the same movement as the previous exercise, pulling yourself up from a full dead hang position all the way up until your chin clears the bar. You will be able to handle more weight with this grip due to a stronger position of your arms.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

Lat pulldowns (supinated, pronated, or neutral grips)

Pull-ups are superior to lat pulls for upper body development from a biomechanical perspective, so if you can do pull-ups, you are better off sticking to them instead of lat pulls. In addition, pull-ups recruit your abs to a much higher degree than lat pulls. But if you cannot complete at least a couple of full hang pull-ups with good form, lat pulls are the place to start in order to increase the strength needed to progress into pull-ups. Sit at a lat pull cable with your knees tucked under the support and the seat adjusted so you have a full reach up to the bar. While just slightly leaning back (not excessively), pull the bar down to your upper chest holding the squeeze at the bottom for a second before returning to the top slowly.

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

NEUTRAL GRIP

SUPINATED GRIP

Barbell bent over rows

Stand in a bent over position with your back slightly higher than parallel to the ground holding a barbell at arms length with your back flat and eyes fixed straight ahead. Row the bar up to your upper abdominal area maintaining a flat back.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

One arm dumbbell rows

With your right hand and right knee on a bench for support, row a dumbbell up to your side with your left arm. Switch your body to the opposite side of the bench and repeat for the same number of reps with the opposite arm.

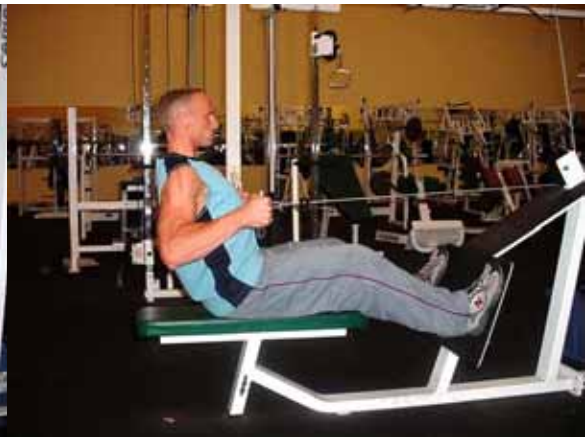

START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Seated horizontal cable rows

Sit with knees slightly bent and row a wider grip attachment up to your upper abdominal area while maintaining a flat back. Do not wildly sway forward and back during the rowing – keep your torso relatively stable while rowing.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

Overhead barbell or dumbbell presses

Perform overhead barbell presses in front of the body trying to avoid leaning back too far, since performing them behind your neck puts your shoulders into excessive external rotation causing potential damage. Dumbbells work great for overhead presses since you can use them at the sides of your head and avoid leaning back too much. Press the dumbbells up in an arc motion bringing them closer together at the top without clanging them.


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

9.2 My Advanced Secret Weapon Exercises

In this section, I wanted to point out and detail some of my favorite "secret weapon" exercises that really should be staples of everybody's routines if you're looking for the fastest way to lose body fat and really get a rock hard set of abs and solid core.

Now I'm certainly not diminishing the importance of some of the basic full body exercises that everybody should be doing like deadlifts, squats, lunges, step ups, and basic upper body presses and pulls.

However, I've noticed that almost NOBODY at all in normal gyms ever does these 6 specific exercises I've detailed below. Yet despite that, those of us fitness pros "in the know" have known for a long time that these are some of the best of the best exercises in existence for a lean rock hard body. If you're not already familiar with these, start making friends with these exercises fast!

1. Renegade Dumbbell Rows

Renegade rows are a killer exercise for your entire core! These are one of my secret weapons. Not only do they do an amazing job on your entire upper body, but your abs and entire core area must stay rock hard throughout this exercise in order to do it properly. This is actually a lot harder than it looks.

Start by getting into a pushup position with your hands on two dumbbells. Now start by rowing your right arm up to your side as shown below. Here's the trick… while you row your right arm, keep your left arm rock solid by imagining pressing it into the ground. Return the right dumbbell back to the ground, and then row with your left arm while keeping your right arm rock solid. Feel the amazing tension throughout your entire core area as you try to stabilize your entire body during this exercise!

ROW 1 ARM

ROW THE OTHER ARM

2. One arm snatches

In any snatch exercise, you are again moving a weight all the way from the ground to a position over your head, which means that you perform massive quantities of work and increase the intensity of your workout. The barbell snatch is one of the two basic competitive Olympic lifts (along with the clean & jerk). However, the barbell snatch is a very complicated and difficult exercise to learn, and is nearly impossible to learn properly without professional coaching. Therefore, I put one arm dumbbell snatches in here since they are a great alternative exercise that is much safer and easier to learn. Hold a dumbbell (or kettlebell if you have access to one) in one arm positioned in the middle of your stance while you are down in the bottom of the deadlift position once again (you should be starting to see why the deadlift is fundamental to your strength and performance in so many ways). Keep your non-working hand in a fist positioned on your lower back to keep your entire body tight. Again, keep your back flat, eyes fixed straight ahead, and tension in your straight arm to be used. Thrust the weight explosively to a position all the way over your head in one quick movement to lock-out, keeping the weight close to your body all the way up (no pressing in this exercise, just one fluid movement from floor to overhead). Reverse back to the floor and immediately thrust up into the next rep. Complete the prescribed number of reps with one arm and then immediately repeat with the second arm. As with other "ground to overhead" lifts, this lift works such a large amount of full body muscle and makes you perform such a large quantity of work, that you'll be huffing and puffing and dripping with sweat after just a couple of sets of one arm snatches. One of the BEST exercises ever invented to increase metabolism and fat burning hormonal response!

START/FINISH

MIDPOINT

3. One arm swings

Begin this exercise with the weight slightly off the floor. Start with a slight back swing between your legs to get the momentum going, then swing the weight out and up to a height just above eye level. Let the weight fall back down to a position between your legs, decelerate the weight quickly at the bottom, and then use the same hip/leg thrust to power the weight back up into another swing. It is important to note that you are using your legs and hips to generate the thrust in the swing (your arm is just holding the weight, not doing the lifting). You're basically coming down into a partial squat with each swing. The combination of swings, snatches, and deadlifts will build your lower back strength so that you never have to worry about a weak back ever again. High repetition swings and snatches are amazing fat burners that blow any traditional cardio out the window!


START/FINISH


MIDPOINT

4. Two arm swings

This is the same basic motion as the one arm swing, but you grasp the dumbbell with both hands on the side of it as pictured below.

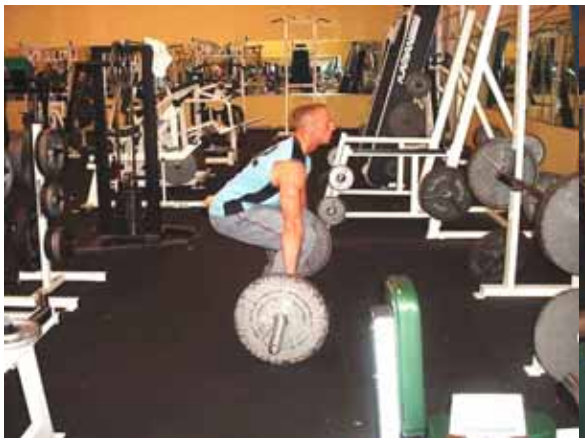

START/FINISH

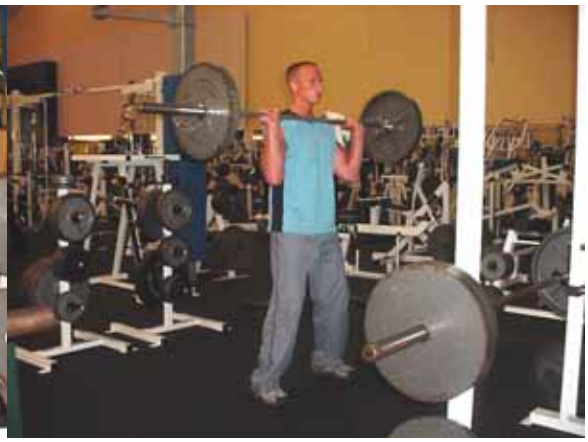

MIDPOINT

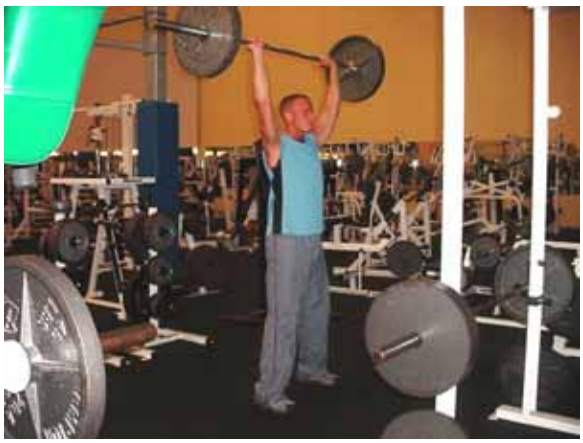
5. Barbell clean & push press

In any clean & presses, you essentially move a weight from the floor all the way to a position above your head. This drill works practically every muscle in your entire body. Due to the ability to move relatively substantial weight in this lift and the most distance moved of any weight training exercise, this exercise tops the list in terms of quantity of work performed, thereby making your workouts much more intense and result producing. Basically, if you want to get lean fast, clean & presses are among the best of choices. This is another exercise that tops the list in terms of metabolism increase and fat burning hormonal response.

Start the exercise as if performing a deadlift – bar rolled up to your shins, sitting back in a squat position, back flat, shoulder blades pulled back, and eyes fixed straight ahead. Start the movement as if performing a deadlift, except power the weight up more explosively so that you move it QUICKLY all the way up in order to duck under it slightly to catch it at your shoulders. Next, thrust the weight up overhead by dipping slightly and utilizing an initial thrust with your legs, and then finishing the press with your arms and shoulders. Reverse the movement in three steps – down to the shoulders, down to the thighs, and then down to the ground. Pause a second before starting the next rep. Can be done with dumbbells too in case you don't have a barbell available.


START


EXPLODE UP TO SHOULDER POSITION


DIP, THRUST WITH LEGS, AND PRESS TO TOP POSITION

6. Dumbbell squat & presses

This is a great combination exercise since it works almost your entire body at once, giving you a very intense workout. Start with dumbbells at the front of your shoulders and squat down into a full squat position. When you reach the top of the squat position, press the dumbbells up over your head. The entire two-part motion is considered one repetition for this exercise.

START/FINISH

DOWN INTO SQUAT POSITION

BACK TO START OF PRESS

FINISH OF PRESS

9.3 The Example Full Body Workouts Explained

Example Bodyweight-Only Routines:

In case you're not quite up to the challenge of going to a gym just yet, or don't have any free weights available at home just yet, I'll give you an example bodyweight-only routine to get you started. However, keep in mind that to really get to the next level with your fitness, I'd highly recommend you eventually join a gym, or at the very least, invest in a stability ball, and a set of adjustable powerblock dumbbells as described in the very beginning "READ FIRST" section of this book, so that you can have your own "mini home gym".

A great way for beginners to start getting fat loss results from your entire body is to begin with simple bodyweight exercise circuits as given in the example below. Your best bet is to try to do these circuit workouts 3-4 times per week. After about 6 weeks, if you worked hard enough, you should be seeing some great results already. The only problem is that your body will adapt to these workouts after a month or two, so eventually, it will be in your best interest to start advancing to some of the free weight based workouts as described throughout the rest of this section of the manual.

Bodyweight Circuit Example Workout

1. Bodyweight squats – 8 reps
2. Floor Mountain Climbers – 20 to 30 seconds of feet shuffling
3. Bodyweight walking lunges – up 8 steps, turn around, back 8 steps
4. Pushups (hands elevated on table or chair if can't do from floor) – 10 reps

Repeat circuit twice each workout for the first 2 weeks. Thereafter, you can repeat the circuit 3-5 times to get a great full body workout. Take no rest between exercises in the circuit, but take 1-2 minutes rest after completing each circuit.

Finish your circuit workout with abs routine level #1 or level #2 from section 3.5.

Example Training Program 1 (Beginner or Intermediate Level):

Alternate Workout A and B, training 3 times per week; then complete 20 minutes of high intensity sprints or other interval training (Workout C) one other day per week for a total of four workouts per week (e.g. Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat = A/B/A/C). Following this example, the following week would look like this: Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat = B/A/B/C. You would follow this type of example training program for 4-6 weeks and then switch to an alternative program for another 4-6 weeks. I recommend printing out or photocopying the example training programs and bringing them with you to the gym to follow along. Or, use your imagination and create your own similar training programs comprised mainly of the multi-joint exercises listed in this book. Remember that in all of these example programs, you should be using heavy enough weights that challenge you to complete the prescribed number of reps and sets. Try to get in the habit of finishing each workout with a 3-5 minute stretching session for all your major muscle groups. Stretching should always be done at the end of your workouts when your muscles are fully warm. Stretching before your workouts actually reduces muscular strength during weight training, so leave flexibility training for the end of your workouts.

Workout A

Functional warm-up (5-7 minutes):

2 minutes stationary bike (lubricates lower body joints)
Straight leg bridge with double leg curl on stability ball (1 x 10)
Straight leg bridge with single leg curl on stability ball (1 x 6 with each leg)
Opposite raise from four-point or push-up position (1 x 5 from each side)
Medicine ball or cable lateral chopping on stability ball (1 x 6 with each side)
Reverse back/hip extensions on stability ball (1 x 8)
Mountain climbers or mountain jumpers (1 x 10 each leg)
Breakdancers (1 x 10 each leg)

Main exercises:
1. Barbell Romanian deadlifts – 2 x 12-14
2. Barbell front squats – 2 x 12-14
3. Wide grip pronated lat pulldowns – 2 x 12-14
4. Walking lunges – up & back 10 steps for 2 sets
5. Barbell bench press – 2 x 12-14
6. Barbell bent over rows – 2 x 12-14
7. Two arm swings – 1 x 25

Ab training (appropriate level for you from section 3.5)
6-8 minute high intensity interval training finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout B

Functional warm-up (5-7 minutes, same as Workout A warm-up):

Main exercises:
1. Barbell back squats – 2 x 12-14
2. Overhead dumbbell presses – 2 x 12-14
3. Barbell standard deadlifts – 2 x 12-14
4. One arm dumbbell rows – 2 x 12-14 with each arm
5. Dumbbell step-ups – 2 x 12-14 with each leg
6. Dumbbell bench press – 1 x 12-14
7. One-arm swings – 1 x 20 with each arm

Ab training (appropriate level for you from section 3.5)
8-10 minute high intensity interval training finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout C

20-25 minutes of wind sprints, bleacher running, hill running, or other high intensity interval training
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Example Training Program 2 (Beginner to Intermediate Levels):

Here is another very high intensity type of program that utilizes circuit training with very short rest periods to keep you moving and keep the intensity high. One of the major differences is that these circuits are free weight based and are guaranteed to be much more effective than the typical machine based circuits you see promoted at some clubs. Take only enough rest between exercises just to catch your breath. Alternate workouts A and B every other day for 3 workouts per week (e.g. M/W/F = A/B/A then B/A/B the following week). You can add a fourth day of some other form of training such as interval training, a spinning class, wind sprints, mountain biking, hill running, etc on any day of the week that you wish.

Workout A

5 minute general warm-up or functional warm-up

Circuit:
1. Dumbbell reverse lunges (alternating legs), 10-12 reps with each leg
2. One arm dumbbell rows, 10-12 reps with each arm
3. Dumbbell squat and presses, 10-12 reps
4. Lat pulldowns, 10-12 reps
5. Dumbbell bench presses, 10-12 reps
6. Dumbbell step ups, 10-12 reps
7. Two arm dumbbell swings, 15 reps

Take as little rest as possible between exercises (<30 seconds)
Repeat this circuit of 7 exercises three times
Don't forget to try to progress on reps or weight on subsequent workouts

Ab training (appropriate level for you from section 3.5)
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout B

5 minute general warm-up or functional warm-up

Circuit:
1. Dumbbell forward lunges (alternating legs), 10-12 reps with each leg
2. Bent over barbell rows, 10-12 reps
3. Dumbbell Romanian deadlifts, 10-12 reps
4. Barbell or dumbbell incline presses, 10-12 reps
5. Box jumps (jump up and down onto step, bench, or box), 20-25 reps
6. One arm dumbbell swings, 10 reps each arm

Take as little rest as possible between exercises (<30 seconds)
Repeat this circuit of 6 exercises three times
Don't forget to try to progress on reps or weight on subsequent workouts

Ab training (appropriate level for you from section 3.5)
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Example Training Program 3 (Intermediate to Advanced Levels):

Alternate Workout A and B, training 3 times per week; then complete 20 minutes of high intensity sprints or other interval training (Workout C) one other day per week for a total of four workouts per week (e.g. Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat = A/B/A/C). Following this example, the following week would look like this: Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat = B/A/B/C. Also, you'll notice that the sets and reps are denoted in three separate stages such as 4 x 5, 5 x 5, 6 x 5. This is an advanced progression. This means that you complete 4 sets of 5 reps with a specific weight the first time you complete workout A. Then, the next time you complete workout A,

you'll complete 5 sets of 5 reps with the same weight. The next time workout A comes along, you'll then complete 6 sets of 5 reps with the same weight, thus completing the cycle. Now, the next time you complete workout A, you increase the weight by 5-10 lbs and drop back to 4 sets of 5 reps. This is a great way to increase the volume of work you complete, cycle the intensity of your workouts, and make great progressions over time. It is much easier to make progressions by increasing your training volume via sets, rather than trying to increase the weight or reps each workout. Some of the exercises in this routine are grouped in "supersets", meaning that you complete the first exercise, take a brief rest, then complete the second exercise. This is one superset. Rest about 60-90 seconds before starting the second superset.

Workout A

Functional warm-up (5-7 minutes):

2 minutes stationary bike (lubricates lower body joints)
Straight leg bridge with double leg curl on stability ball (1 x 10)
Straight leg bridge with single leg curl on stability ball (1 x 6 with each leg)
Opposite raise from four-point or push-up position (1 x 5 from each side)
Medicine ball or cable lateral chopping on stability ball (1 x 6 with each side)
Reverse back/hip extensions on stability ball (1 x 8)
Mountain climbers or mountain jumpers (1 x 10 each leg)
Breakdancers (1 x 10 each leg)

Main exercises:
Superset 1
1a. Barbell clean & presses - 4 x 4, 5 x 4, 6 x 4, increase weight and drop back to 4 x 4, etc.
1b. Wide grip pronated weighted pull-ups – 4 x 5, 5 x 5, 6 x 5 (use lat pulls if you can't complete 5 pull-ups in good form)

Superset 2
2a. Barbell Front squats - 4 x 5, 5 x 5, 6 x 5
2b. One arm dumbbell rows – 4 x 6, 5 x 6, 6 x 6 (with each arm)

Two arm swings – 2 x 25

Ab training (appropriate level for you from section 3.5)
6-8 minute high intensity interval training finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout B

Functional warm-up (5-7 minutes, same as Workout A warmup):

Main exercises:
Superset1
1a. Romanian deadlifts – 3 x 6, 4 x 6, 5 x 6
1b. Flat barbell bench press – 3 x 6, 4 x 6, 5 x 6
Superset2
2a. One arm snatches – 3 x 5, 4 x 5, 5 x 5 (with each arm)
2b. Walking dumbbell lunges – up & back 30 yards, rest, repeat for 3-5 sets

8-10 minute high intensity interval training finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout C

20-25 minutes of wind sprints, bleacher running, hill running, or other high intensity interval training
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Example Training Program 4 (Intermediate to Advanced Levels):

Alternate Workout A and B, training 3 times per week; then complete 20 minutes of high intensity sprints or other interval training one other day per week for a total of four workouts per week (e.g. Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat = A/B/A/C). Following this example, the following week would look like this: Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat = B/A/B/C.

Workout A

Functional warm-up (5-7 minutes):

2 minutes stationary bike (lubricates lower body joints)
Straight leg bridge with double leg curl on stability ball (1 x 10)
Straight leg bridge with single leg curl on stability ball (1 x 6 with each leg)
Opposite raise from four-point or push-up position (1 x 5 from each side)
Medicine ball or cable lateral chopping on stability ball (1 x 6 with each side)
Reverse back/hip extensions on stability ball (1 x 8)
Mountain climbers or mountain jumpers (1 x 10 each leg)
Breakdancers (1 x 10 each leg)

Main exercises:
Superset 1
1a. Barbell standard deadlifts - 4 x 4, 5 x 4, 6 x 4
1b. Incline dumbbell presses – 4 x 6, 5 x 6, 6 x 6
Superset 2
2a. Renegade dumbbell rows - 3 x 8, 4 x 8, 5 x 8 (# of reps with each arm)
2b. Weighted dips – 3 x 8, 4 x 8, 5 x 8

One arm swings – 2 x 20 with each arm

Ab training (appropriate level for you from section 3.5)
6-8 minute high intensity interval training finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout B
Functional warm-up (5-7 minutes, same as Workout A warmup)

Main exercises:
Superset 1
1a. Dumbbell squat & press – 3 x 6, 4 x 6, 5 x 6
1b. Weighted chin-ups (supinated grip) – 3 x 6, 4 x 6, 5 x 6
Superset 2
2a. Dumbbell step-ups – 3 x 8, 4 x 8, 5 x 8 (with each leg)
2b. Pushups variations - 3 x 10, 4 x 10, 5 x 10

8-10 minute high intensity interval training finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout C

20-25 minutes of wind sprints, bleacher running, hill running, or other high intensity interval training
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Example Training Program 5 (Intermediate to Advanced Levels):

This is a different type of routine that is great for building and maintaining strength while also reducing body fat. This type of workout contains 6 main exercises per session – two for the legs and four exercises working the major multi-joint movement planes of the upper body. The key to this type of workout is that the sequences of exercises are switched from workout to workout even though the exercises remain the same. This means you'll be stronger on certain lifts on the day when they are first in the sequence and weaker on the days when they are toward the end of the sequence.

The key to these workouts is to use a weight that challenges you for the prescribed number of reps. You are not using enough weight if you complete the prescribed number of reps and could still do 3 or 4 more. Increase the weight slightly each week to maintain progression. The sets are reduced in this type of workout to avoid over-training due to completing the same exercises in each workout. Rest 2-3 minutes between work sets in these workouts. Alternate Workout A and B, training 3 times per week; then complete 20 minutes of high intensity sprints or other interval training one other day per week for a total of four workouts per week (e.g. Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat = A/B/A/C). Following this example, the following week would look like this: Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat = B/A/B/C.

Workout A

Functional warm-up (5-7 minutes):

2 minutes stationary bike (lubricates lower body joints)
Straight leg bridge with double leg curl on stability ball (1 x 10)
Straight leg bridge with single leg curl on stability ball (1 x 6 with each leg)
Opposite raise from four-point or push-up position (1 x 5 from each side)
Medicine ball or cable lateral chopping on stability ball (1 x 6 with each side)
Reverse back/hip extensions on stability ball (1 x 8)
Mountain climbers or mountain jumpers (1 x 10 each leg)
Breakdancers (1 x 10 each leg)

Main exercises:
1. Barbell overhead squats – warm up sets, then 2 x 6
2. Incline barbell presses – warm up sets, then 2 x 6
3. Weighted pull-ups - warm up sets, then 2 x 6
4. Romanian deadlifts – warm up sets, then 2 x 6
5. Weighted dips – warm up sets, then 2 x 8
6. Barbell bent over rows – warm up sets, then 2 x 8

Ab training (appropriate level for you from section 3.5)
6-8 minute high intensity interval training finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout B

Functional warm-up (5-7 minutes, same as Workout A warmup)

Main exercises:
1. Romanian deadlifts – warm up sets, then 2 x 6
2. Barbell bent over rows – warm up sets, then 2 x 8
3. Weighted dips – warm up sets, then 2 x 8
4. Barbell overhead squats – warm up sets, then 2 x 6
5. Weighted pull-ups - warm up sets, then 2 x 6
6. Incline barbell presses – warm up sets, then 2 x 6

6-8 minute high intensity interval training finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout C

20-25 minutes of wind sprints, bleacher running, hill running, rowing, or other high intensity interval training
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Example Training Program 6 (Intermediate to Advanced Levels):

Here is a very high intensity type of program that is great for fat burning and getting ripped. It works by training a large percentage of your body's musculature very intensely with short rest periods. Take only enough rest between exercises just to catch your breath. Alternate workouts A and B every other day for 3 workouts per week (e.g. M/W/F = A/B/A then B/A/B the following week).

Workout A

3 minutes high intensity jumping rope
One arm dumbbell snatches – 1 x 10 each arm
3 minutes rowing machine
Dumbbell squat and presses – 1 x 10
3 minutes high intensity jumping rope
Ballistic pushups (clap pushups) or feet elevated pushups – 2 reps short of max
Bodyweight rows up to smith bar with feet elevated on bench – 1 rep short of max
Dumbbell squat and presses – 1 x 10
3 minutes high intensity stair climbing (machine or actual stairs)
One arm dumbbell swings – 1 x 8 each arm, reduce weight and 1 x 8 each arm again
Ballistic pushups (clap pushups) or feet elevated pushups – 2 reps short of max
Bodyweight rows up to smith bar with feet elevated – 1 rep short of max
3 minutes high intensity jumping rope
Ab training program
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

Workout B
3 minutes rowing machine to warm up

Superset
1a. Standard deadlifts – 4 x 5
1b. Flat bench dumbbell chest presses – 4 x 8

Exercises in sequence without supersets
1. Pull-ups – 1 x near max reps
2. Lat pulls – 1 x 10 (immediately following pull-ups without rest)
3. 3 minutes intense jumping rope
4. Walking dumbbell lunges – up and back 20 yds
5. 3 minutes intense heavy bag boxing
6. Dumbbell step-ups – 1 x 12 each leg
7. Chin-ups – 1 x near max reps
8. Neutral grip lat pulldowns (immediately following chin-ups without rest)
9. 3 minutes stair climber to finish
3-5 minutes stretching all muscle groups

When you examine the layout of some of these training program examples, you might think that there aren't enough exercises involved or that there isn't enough isolation work for the arms and other muscle groups. However, you couldn't be more wrong. Remember, focusing on multi-joint exercises will provide you much better results and will be more functional to activities in everyday life. Your arms and shoulders get plenty of work through heavy pressing and pulling in the major upper body movement planes without the need for single joint exercises. However, this is not to say that there isn't a place for an occasional inclusion of single joint exercises in your routines (but only sparingly). Make no mistake…the workout examples contained in this manual will thoroughly work every muscle group in your body, helping you to develop and/or maintain a lean ripped body. I guarantee that these workouts are very intense and will stimulate changes in your body. Give a 4-6 week cycle a try and you will see for yourself.

Remember that you need to be consistent with your training variables for specific time periods in order to have a basis for progression over time. However, in order to prevent stagnation and continue to get results in the long run, you also need to change some of your training variables such as sets, reps, exercises, quantity of weight, rep speed, intensity, angle, rest periods, duration of workouts, exercise sequence, etc. every 4-6 weeks.

10.0 THE OVERWHELMING IMPORTANCE OF YOUR DIET

I saved the most important information for last. To be perfectly honest, dietary habits are the sole reason that most people will never obtain a ripped midsection with visible abs. No matter how hard they train, most people will never get their body fat low enough to see their abs if their diet is poor. I see people all the time that train like crazy every day without ever reducing their body fat due to their poor dietary habits. In this section, I'm going to give you all the tips and secrets I've picked up over the years for compiling a healthy diet that will promote fat loss.

10.1 The Blood Sugar/Insulin Process and Glycemic Index of Foods

These days, insulin has gotten a bad rap since high levels of it within the body tend to promote fat storage and make it harder to use body fat for energy. However, insulin is also a very anabolic hormone that can help shuttle nutrients into your muscle cells and promote muscle recovery. When you eat carbohydrates, they are broken down in your system and raise your blood sugar. Your pancreas secretes insulin to remove the excess sugar from your blood and deposit it into fat stores (upon conversion), muscle glycogen stores, or liver glycogen stores. If your muscle and liver glycogen stores are already full, the excess blood sugar will be stored as fat. If your muscle glycogen stores are depleted such as after an intense workout, insulin secreted in response to a high carbohydrate meal will push the excess blood sugar and other nutrients into your muscle cells. This is one time when insulin is very good and helps promote muscle protein synthesis (recovery). The degree to which ingested carbs will raise your blood sugar depends on the quantity of carbs you ate and how fast they are digested. Factors such as the quantity of fiber the carbs contained, along with how much protein and fat you ate in combination with the carbs all affect how quickly the carbs are digested.

Generally speaking, the more unrefined and fibrous the carbohydrate source, and the more protein and fat eaten with the meal, the slower the carbohydrate will be digested, and the lower and more steady the blood sugar and insulin response. Slow and steady carbohydrate sources are ideal because they give you steady energy levels, reduce cravings, and allow your body to utilize fat for energy in addition. More heavily refined starches and sugars where the fiber has been removed will be digested much more quickly and cause a higher blood sugar spike and subsequent crash after insulin has done its job. People who eat a lot of refined processed carbohydrates typically go through these cycles of blood sugar spikes and crashes, which causes them to crave more carbohydrates and leads to body fat gain. A little known fact is that carbs are not the only food substrate that can promote an insulin response. Large doses of certain free form amino acids and quickly digested proteins such as whey protein also can trigger an insulin response.

One of the methods that was devised originally to help diabetics manage their blood sugar properly was the glycemic index (GI) of foods. The GI basically categorizes foods (generally carbohydrate sources) into low, moderate, or high on the GI scale. I won't get

into the specific numbers of the GI scale because I don't feel that's important. Basically, foods that raise your blood sugar quickly will have a higher GI and foods that raise your blood sugar slowly and to a lower degree will have a lower GI. Examples of foods with high GI's are white rice, white bread, white potatoes, corn flakes, crispy rice cereals, sugars (except fructose), ice cream, bananas, cooked carrots, candy, and any other refined carbohydrates where the fiber has been removed.

Examples of foods with lower GI's are most dairy products, most fruits and vegetables, whole unrefined grains, sweet potatoes, barley, beans, and most other higher fiber carbohydrate sources. The GI was originally meant to help diabetics know that if they ate more high GI foods, they were most likely going to need more insulin because they would have a quicker and higher blood sugar response. The thought was that if they focused on lower GI foods, they could manage their diabetes better by always maintaining lower and more stable blood sugar levels. This concept has also crossed over into the fitness industry with many diets promoting that you focus on lower GI foods in order to lose body fat. Take note that the one time of day that you can benefit from eating high GI foods would be immediately after a workout to promote an insulin release and replenish your muscle glycogen stores that were depleted during the intense workout.

While the GI is basically a good thing to understand if you want to lose body fat, there are problems with it and reasons why it can be misleading. First, the GI of food is measured using a set dose where the quantity of each individual food must be the same. Therefore, while a certain food like cooked carrots may have a high GI, you'd have to an unrealistically large quantity of carrots to get enough carbohydrates to cause a significant blood sugar response. This is one reason I contend that the GI is not that important if the quantity of the carbohydrates are relatively low. It's just not logical to think that something as healthy as carrots or bananas, which provide many important nutrients for the body, are going to stifle your weight loss efforts, unless of course, you overdo the quantity.

Also, another reason I contend that the GI of individual foods should not be relied on too heavily is because how you combine your foods into a meal controls what type of blood sugar response you get from the meal. For example, if you combine a higher GI food such as a banana into a meal with portions of protein and healthy fats and/or an additional fibrous food, you're not going to get as quick of a blood sugar response as if you ate the banana alone. So in essence, my advice is to not get too bogged down with worrying

about the GI of foods, but rather focus on combining healthy carbohydrate sources with lean protein sources, and healthy fats. For example, you can make a great meal out of that aforementioned banana by slicing it into a serving of lowfat cottage cheese and some almonds or walnuts. Also, you can generally assume that the more fiber a product contains, the slower your blood sugar response to that food. You generally want to look for products that contain at least 1.5-2 grams or more of fiber per each 10 grams of total carbohydrates. So, if a carbohydrate source contains 30 grams of total carbohydrates, it would be best if that carb source had at least 4-5 grams of fiber. Whole unrefined grains, fruits, vegetables, and beans are the best sources of carbohydrates to maintain a healthy diet.

10.2 Why Not to Follow Fad Diets or Crash Diets

There are literally hundreds of fad diets on the market today with everyone claiming that "their" diet is the best for weight loss. The problem with most fad diets is that they limit consumption of a certain macronutrient (protein, carbs, or fat) or food group, and therefore tend to fight against what your body needs to function most efficiently. For example, with any of the low-carb diets that are so popular these days, they severely limit your consumption of important carbohydrate sources. While people may experience initial weight loss with these diets, I advise against them because they typically also cause a loss of lean muscle, which will lower your RMR, making it easier to put the fat back on in the long run.

One of the first reasons people experience an initial quick weight loss with a low carb diet is that they lose water weight by depleting their muscle glycogen stores. Muscle glycogen stores are basically stored carbohydrate in all of your skeletal muscle. A significant quantity of water is also held in the muscle cells of the body along with the glycogen. When you deplete your muscle glycogen stores, you also lose a good bit of water weight. This is not necessarily a good thing, since your performance in the gym will suffer and your muscles will appear flat. It is common for people to notice that their muscles appear smaller (kind of shrunken) when they go on a low carb diet.

Another one of the reasons that a low carb diet can cause people to lose weight is that they maintain lower blood sugar levels and lower insulin levels, and therefore can lose fat easier since high insulin levels promote fat storage and make it harder to burn fat.

However, there are ways to still eat your carbohydrates in moderation while still maintaining reasonable blood sugar and insulin levels to allow fat burning. My advice is not to fall into the trap of the low carb diet. You can still enjoy carbs as long as you pick healthy unprocessed choices and combine them at every meal with lean proteins and healthy fats. Realize that although I don't recommend a low carb diet, I'm not saying I recommend a high carb diet either. You'll never get lean if you're overfeeding on carbs. Including a moderate quantity of healthy carbs in your diet will help you have the energy to workout intensely and recover from your workouts while helping to maintain your lean muscle mass and keep your metabolic rate higher.

Another type of fad diet that has been promoted in the past (and still promoted by many health professionals) for weight loss is a low fat diet. Again, now you've essentially limited one of the important macronutrients that your body needs to function properly. People typically struggle to lose weight on a low fat diet because they tend to replace the fat calories they would have eaten with extra carbohydrates (particularly refined carbohydrates). A larger quantity of refined carbohydrates in the diet will now trigger higher insulin levels, which will make you crave more carbs as your blood sugar crashes. This becomes a difficult endless cycle of craving refined carbs. This makes weight loss on a low fat diet very difficult.

Also, low fat diets tend to detrimentally affect hormonal processes in the body, which can shut down your fat loss and muscle gain efforts. A sufficient quantity of healthy fat will also help satisfy your hunger. You want moderate quantities of healthy fat, but watch your total calories because high fat foods are calorie dense. Studies indicate that in order to maintain all of the healthy metabolic processes in which your body relies on dietary fat, you should keep your total fat intake somewhere between 20-40% of your total calories. Consuming a diet containing lower than 20% fat can detrimentally affect your weight loss efforts, your hormonal processes, your training performance, and many other bodily functions. I've noticed that the majority of consumers are confused about dietary fat and most often underestimate the importance of healthy fat in their diet or don't understand which fats are good for you and which are bad for you. Due to this consumer confusion, I will dedicate the next section to making it a little easier for you to understand dietary fats and how important they are to helping you lose body fat.

10.3 Eating the Right Fats Can Actually Make You Leaner

Let me state this fact for the record: EATING FAT DOES NOT MAKE YOU FAT! That is, as long as you eat the right kinds of fat without overdoing the quantity. Yes, fat (at 9 calories/gram) is more calorie dense than protein or carbohydrates (at 4 calories/gram), but eating adequate quantities of healthy fats will actually help you lose body fat and create a lean healthy body. The confusion about dietary fat is easy to understand in today's society. Not only do you get mixed messages from food manufacturing advertisers, but to make things worse, you even get mixed messages from the medical industry on what kinds and how much fat you should include in your diet.

Some so called "experts" still stick to the assertion that a low-fat/high-carbohydrate diet is the best way to lose weight and prevent heart disease. On the other end of the spectrum, other so called "experts" argue that a high-fat, high-protein, low-carb diet is the magic secret to losing weight and preventing heart disease. As with most arguments among experts, the answer for the majority of people lies somewhere in the middle. When you review specific population studies of traditional diets of various groups of people around the world, it begins to become clear that there is no magic ratio of macronutrients that will prevent heart disease and obesity.

Instead, it is the **processing of foods** that is the key factor in acquiring a lean healthy body. For example, it is known that heart disease, type II diabetes, and obesity are unheard of in historical Eskimo populations despite consuming an extremely high fat diet comprised of mostly whale blubber, seal fat, cold water fish, and organ meat. Take note that although the Eskimos ate a very high fat diet, their diet was all natural and contained none of the processed foods that comprise the majority of the typical western diet.

Another example of very healthy populations is that of Pacific Islanders and several countries of southeast Asia where coconut fat traditionally has comprised 60%-70% of their total caloric intake. These populations that relied on coconut fat (which is over 90% saturated fat) as such a high percentage of their diet were historically very lean and once again, heart disease, type II diabetes, and obesity were practically non-existent prior to the infiltration of modern western dietary influences. As with the Eskimos, the Pacific Islanders ate virtually no processed foods typical of a modern western diet.

Yet another example traditional populations exhibiting superb health despite eating a very high fat diet is that of certain African tribes such as the Masai and Samburu. These tribes were known to consume the majority of their diet through whole raw milk, beef, and blood, consuming an average of 4-5 times the quantity of fat as disease-ridden Americans, yet these tribes remained free of modern degenerative diseases and display very lean bodies! Traditional Mediterranean diets are also known to be very high in fat (sometimes up to 70% of calories), yet these populations again remained in very good health. There are many more examples of the traditional diets of specific populations around the world and the corresponding excellent health of these populations.

Although these diets differ drastically in their composition of carbs, fat, and protein, the one aspect that remains consistent with all traditional diets which accounts for their numerous health benefits is that they were comprised of food in its **most natural and unprocessed state** – the way we were meant to eat food.

The historical increase in the use of highly processed and refined foods such as refined flour, refined sugar, and refined/hydrogenated vegetable oils coincides with the increase in degenerative diseases such as heart disease and obesity. Food processing is one of those instances where technology can actually be a bad thing!

As I've previously mentioned, most people need adequate amounts of healthy fibrous carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats to maintain optimal health and create the fat-burning machine that is your body. Restricting or eliminating one or two of these important macronutrients will almost always detrimentally affect your efforts to get lean. So now that we've established that eating adequate amounts (generally 20-40% of your total calories) of healthy fats will actually help you lose body fat, let's examine which fats are good and which are bad. First, please understand that all fats found in nature are made up of some ratio of polyunsaturated, monounsaturated, and saturated fat. How much of each type of fat is determined by what part of the world the plant or animal lives (i.e. what climate, soil type, etc.).

To understand which fats are healthy and which are unhealthy, just ask yourself the following simple yet important questions:

- For plant based fat sources - Is it a minimally processed natural product or a heavily processed chemically altered product?
- For animal based fat sources (meat or dairy) - Did it originate from mass production farm raised animals or from free range animals and/or wild game?

Once you ask these questions, the answer to healthy or unhealthy fat becomes intuitive. For example, most modern medical recommendations insist that the saturated fat in animal fat is unhealthy. This may be true if the animal was farm raised and fattened up with grains and soy that are not the natural diet of the animal. If an animal is "free range" or "grass fed" and allowed to eat the majority of its diet through grasses and other forage that it was meant to eat naturally, the meat will generally be much leaner and any fats within will be much healthier for your consumption.

For example, grass fed beef is known to contain much higher quantities of the healthy fats such as conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) and omega-3 fatty acids compared with grain fed beef. The same is true of the milk from grass fed cows versus grain fed cows. You can also bank on the fact that wild game will almost always contain healthy fats and will be much leaner than farm raised animals. In addition, contrary to popular belief, milk fat is actually a very healthy fat, but ONLY as it occurs naturally in raw milk from grass-fed free range cows. However, once again, the technology of food processing messes up a good thing by pasteurizing and homogenizing the milk fat (heating it and breaking it up into very small particles, respectively).

Unlike raw milk fat, pasteurized and homogenized milk fat is thought to have negative effects in the body. It may be hard for you to find organic meat and dairy from "free range" animals unless you shop at "whole food" or "organic" markets, and you will find it very hard to find "raw" milk in the US (visit www.realmilk.com/where.html to find out if raw milk is available near you), so your easiest strategy may be to limit animal fat by choosing fat free dairy and the leanest cuts of meat possible. Just realize that animal fats from meat and whole dairy are important sources of fat soluble vitamins, so eating some "whole" yogurt or "whole" cheeses on occasion may be a good idea. Just try to stay away from "whole" milk in order to avoid the homogenized milk fat. Personally, I luckily have access to a health food store in my area that sells raw milk from farms in the region. When I can get an order, I'll choose whole raw milk. If I'm stuck at the typical chain grocery store, where

unhomogenized milk is not available, I'll choose skim milk to avoid the homogenized milk fat.

Moving on to plant based fats, but remaining on the subject of saturated fat, it is important to understand that the saturated fats in minimally processed tropical oils (such as coconut oil, palm oil, and cocoa butter) have received an undeserved bad rap. More and more scientific evidence is mounting relating to the numerous health benefits of tropical oils. For example, coconut oil is largely comprised of a healthy saturated fat called lauric acid (a medium chain triglyceride) which has many health benefits and is lacking in modern western diets that are so highly comprised of heavily processed unhealthy polyunsaturated oils like soybean, corn, and cottonseed oils. In addition, the fat from cocoa beans (cocoa butter) is highly comprised of another healthy saturated fat called stearic acid, which, along with the high antioxidant content of cocoa, make dark bittersweet chocolate (not milk chocolate) a very healthy yet tasty treat! You can begin to see that if a source of dietary fat is unprocessed and natural, it will be healthy, regardless of whether it is mostly saturated, polyunsaturated, or monounsaturated.

Now lets move on to a discussion to better understand the unsaturated plant based oils which are mostly comprised of a combination of monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat (with small amounts of saturated fat). When it comes to monounsaturated fat, you pretty much can't go wrong, because it is a fairly stable fat (not overly reactive to light and heat). Great sources of monounsaturated fat are extra virgin olive oil, avocados, pecans, macadamias, and almonds.

You have to be more careful when it comes to polyunsaturated fats. Many researchers believe that the overabundance of refined and/or hydrogenated (the source of the deadly trans fats) polyunsaturated fats such as soybean, corn, and cottonseed oils in modern western diets are the main culprit for the explosion of heart disease and obesity since the middle of the 20th century.

Polyunsaturated fats are much more reactive to heat and light and therefore become highly toxic when processed and heated as is done in almost all processed foods on the market today. In addition, modern diets are so heavily skewed towards omega-6 polyunsaturated fats compared to omega-3 polyunsaturated fats, that most people eating a modern western diet are deficient in omega-3's.

Don't misunderstand me here - polyunsaturated fats are an important part of a healthy diet. In fact, omega-6 and omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids are what are referred to as the "essential fatty acids" because our bodies cannot manufacture them. However, because they are so unstable and highly reactive, the trick with polyunsaturated fats is to eat them as minimally processed as possible in the form of raw nuts and seeds or carefully extracted flax and fish oils. Due to the overuse of soy and corn products in animal feed as well as in food manufacturing, the omega-6/omega-3 polyunsaturated fat ratio of our food supply is far too high in omega-6 currently. Flax seeds, flax oil, fish oil, and walnuts are the best natural sources of omega-3's helping to bring you back to a normal balance of omega-6 to omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids.

Take note that the powerful multi-billion dollar edible oil industry (based on mostly refined and hydrogenated polyunsaturated oils) has influenced the media, the government, (and even the medical industry to a degree) to continue to assert that the processed polyunsaturated oils are healthy and that saturated fats are the culprit for heart disease. On the contrary, studies performed that don't have monetary ties to the food manufacturers have indicated that the refined and hydrogenated polyunsaturated oils are the real problem, and not the perfectly natural saturated fats.

First, realize that cholesterol in the body is a healing substance and is deposited on the artery walls to help heal a problem. The problem is that the overabundance of highly toxic refined and hydrogenated polyunsaturated oils in a modern western diet causes inflammation in the arteries signaling the need for cholesterol deposition for healing.

These dangerous oils are literally in almost all processed food on the shelves of grocery stores and in the deep fryers of every restaurant. If you don't believe me, consider that animal products (meat and dairy) have been a main constituent of the human diet for thousands of years, yet heart disease was practically non-existent until the mass incorporation of refined and hydrogenated oils into the food supply in the middle of the 20th century. This also correlates to the mass inclusion of highly processed and refined carbohydrates into the food supply. Another fact to keep in mind is that as heart disease and obesity grew throughout the 20th century, the percentage of saturated fat in the average diet decreased, while the percentage of highly processed (refined and/or hydrogenated) polyunsaturated fat in the average diet **drastically** increased. Starting to see the connection?

As long as you eat a variety of minimally processed fat sources, you don't need to worry too much about whether you're eating saturated, monounsaturated, or polyunsaturated fats because you will inadvertently obtain a healthy balance of fats. The key is just to keep your foods as natural and unprocessed as possible. Avoiding processed foods as much as possible will help you avoid the deadly trans fats that are present in almost all processed food on the market today. Trans fats will be discussed further in section 10.7. The best fats to cook or fry with are saturated fats such as coconut oil, palm oil, or butter, since saturated fats are less reactive to heat and create fewer toxins and free radicals when exposed to heat and light. However, to reduce calories, it is best to try to cook without oils by methods such as steaming, baking, or boiling instead of frying.

Examples of healthy fats to include in your diet are nuts (pecans, walnuts, almonds, macadamias, cashews, etc.), seeds (pumpkin seeds, de-shelled sunflower seeds, flax seeds, sesame seeds), avocados (or guacamole), extra virgin olive oil, coconut (coconut milk and/or virgin coconut oil), "natural" or "organic" peanut butter (or other natural nut butters like almond butter, etc), fish and fish oils, flax oil, and even cocoa butter (from dark bittersweet chocolate – look for chocolate with 70% or greater cocoa content).

It is important to eat a variety of healthy fats so that you get the benefits of the various types. Tasty ways to add raw nuts and seeds to your diet are to add them to yogurt, cold cereal, hot cereal, and salads. A suggestion to get flax seed oil and extra virgin olive oil into your diet is to make your own homemade salad dressing made up of two thirds balsamic vinegar mixed with one third equal parts olive oil and flax oil. Olive oil and flax oil can also be added to your meal replacement protein shakes if you choose to use them as convenient meals. Another great oil you can use for salad dressings and to mix into protein shakes is "Udo's Choice Perfected Oil Blend" (available at supplement shops or health food stores), which is a very healthy blend of carefully extracted oils from flax seeds, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, coconut, rice bran, and oat bran. You can also find various "natural" nut and seed butters such as almond butter, cashew butter, macadamia butter, and sunflower seed butter to expand your horizons beyond just peanut butter. In addition, you can find virgin coconut oil and learn more about some of the many health benefits of coconut oil at www.coconutoil.com.

10.4 Balanced Healthy Eating

Take a look at all of the products that food manufacturers and fast food chains throw at us these days and ask yourself if you think nature intended us to eat that way. Our food supply has become so heavily modified that we are no longer eating foods in their natural state. This wreaks havoc on our bodies. This topic alone could comprise an entire book, so I will stick to the recommendations to keep you eating a balanced diet that will promote a lean healthy body.

A healthy diet starts with the choices you make at the grocery store. First, it is a good idea to go to the grocery store on a full stomach, so you don't make impulse purchases. Second, plan your balanced meals for the entire week, so that you know exactly what you're shopping for and you will pick up only the items you need to make those meals. This way, you eliminate buying all of the junk foods and snacks that you don't need. If you don't have them around the house, you won't eat them! If all you have is healthy foods around the house, then all you will eat are those healthy foods. It's that simple.

By the way, once you start eating a healthy, natural diet, most people find that they no longer crave junk foods or heavily processed foods. Third, focus your shopping on the outer portions of the grocery store where all of the more unprocessed foods are located like fruits, vegetables, lean meats, fish, low fat dairy, etc. If you'll notice, the interior isles are comprised of mostly highly processed, heavily salted and sweetened foods. There are obviously exceptions to this since some of your healthy choices like extra virgin olive oil, natural peanut butter, high fiber cereals, beans, teas, etc. will come from the interior isles.

As stated previously, there is no reason to eliminate or limit your consumption of any one food group or macronutrient (protein, carbs, or fat). Restrictive diets will always fail at some point. All three macronutrients (as a side note, there are actually six categories of nutrients – carbs, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals, and water) serve important functions in our bodies, and when eaten in the right quantities and at the right times, promote a lean healthy body. I don't feel there's any magical dietary composition that promotes the best results for body fat loss. Some scientists and medical experts recommend a 40/40/20 diet (40% carbs, 40% protein, 20% fat), while others recommend a 40/30/30 composition (as in

Barry Sears' Zone Diet), and still others recommend a higher carbohydrate content along the lines of 60/15/25 (traditional medical recommendation).

Although I don't think it's necessary to be meticulous about exact percentages of macronutrients in your diet, I do think that starting with your protein requirements makes sense. Most recent studies suggest a daily protein intake of approximately 1 gram per pound of bodyweight for hard training individuals like you. Although some will argue that may be too much and some argue that still may not be enough, I believe it's a good starting point. For example, if you're 190 lbs, you could try to consume approximately 190 grams of protein/day split relatively evenly between 5-6 meals/day. You want to include some protein at each meal to help provide satiety and to assure your body has a continual supply of amino acids throughout the day.

If you had calculated that your maintenance caloric intake is 3000 calories/day (for that 190-lb male example), then you'd need to consume approximately 2500 calories/day to lose approximately 1 lb/week (500 calorie deficit/day = 3500 calorie deficit/week = approx. 1 lb of weight loss). Therefore, the 190 grams of protein (190 g x 4 kcal/g = 760 calories) represents about 30% (760/2500) of your daily caloric intake. The rest of your calories should come from unrefined carbohydrates (focusing mostly on lower GI carbs) and a healthy (minimally processed and non-hydrogenated) variety of fats. I don't think there's a need to focus on the exact ratio of the carbs and fats. They each could evenly comprise the remaining calories on some days, or could lean higher towards the carbs or higher towards the fat on other days.

Most people will probably tend to consume slightly higher quantities of carbs rather than fats. That's fine as long as you choose the right types of carbs. Everyone is different and will function most efficiently at different ratios of macronutrients than other people. There is no magic ratio that will work for everyone. Just focus on your total caloric intake and eating healthy foods as described below. Remember to calculate your approximate caloric range for weight maintenance and weight loss. While the 190-lb male example needed about 3000 calories per day to maintain the same weight, a 130-lb female would only need about 2000 calories per day to maintain the same weight.

Here are the foods that should comprise the majority of your diet in order to promote a lean healthy body: vegetables, fruits, lean white and red meats, fish, low-fat or fat-free

dairy, eggs and egg whites, whole unrefined grains, legumes (peas, beans, peanuts), whole grain bread, high fiber cereals (avoid low fiber cereals, even if they are unsweetened; they are acceptable only as a post-workout meal), nuts, seeds, and non-hydrogenated minimally processed oils (such as extra virgin olive oil, flax seed oil, and virgin coconut oil). Try to avoid drinking fruit juices. We were meant to eat the whole fruit, which includes the fiber and other beneficial nutrients, instead of just drinking the juice. Fruit juices simply add extra calories to your diet without really satisfying your hunger, so stick to whole fruits instead of juice.

Not only will eating a balanced diet containing a variety of the above foods give you all the quality proteins, fats, and carbohydrates you need to operate efficiently, but they will also give you all of the vitamins, minerals, and other micronutrients you need to stay healthy. You'll have fewer cravings for food when you're getting all the nutrients you need. Keep in mind that even if you eat a well balanced diet comprised of all of the foods listed above, you will not get lean if you're still eating too many calories for your individual needs.

So, I do recommend that you start getting in the habit of reading labels and learn approximately how many calories are in all of your typical foods. I've included a table below with some examples of typical healthy foods and approximately how many calories and grams of macronutrients are in each. I have included some brand names of certain products simply to provide clarity and give examples, not because I have any affiliation with those companies.

	Protein (grams)	Carbohydrate (grams)	Fat (grams)	Calories (kcal)	Fiber (grams)
Protein Source (one portion)					
fish (cod, pollack, flounder, bass, etc), 4 oz, avg	25	0	1	109	0
salmon or trout (4 oz)	21	0	7	147	0
beef - eye round steak, 4 oz	28	0	6	166	0
pork tenderloin, 4oz	21	0	5	129	0
1 cup 1% cottage cheese	32	6	2	170	0
1 cup fat free ricotta cheese	28	12	0	160	0
typical chicken breast, 4 oz	26	0	4	140	0
canned tuna (one small can chunk light)	33	0	2	150	0
three whole eggs (large)	18	0	13	194	0
extra lean ground turkey (4 oz)	28	0	1.5	125.5	0
ground buffalo	28	0	8	184	0
Carbohydrate Source (one portion)					
1/2 cup dry oatmeal	5	27	3	143	4
1/3 cup dry oat bran	8	23	4	142	6
1/2 cup rice bran	10	34	14	245	19
1/4 cup wheat germ	8	19	3	123	4
1/2 large sweet potato	3	25	1	112	3
1/2 cup dry barley	3	26	1	116	3
1/2 cup All Bran cereal	4	24	0.5	86.5	10
1 cup Kashi Good Friends Cinna raisin cereal	4	39	1.5	155.5	10
1 cup Kashi Good Friends cereal	4	32	1.5	127.5	10
1/2 cup Fiber One cereal	2	24	0.5	66.5	14
2 slices Martins whole wheat potato bread	12	28	2	154	8
one serving (2 oz dry) Hodgson Mill W/W pasta	9	34	1	163	6
1/2 cup blueberries	2	19	0	72	4
1 apple	1	23	0	84	4
1 orange	2	25	0	99	3
10 strawberries	1	18	0	67	3
1/4 cup dry Kashi Breakfast Pilaf (1/2 c. cooked)	6	30	3	153	6
one serving baked beans	6	27	2	132	6
Healthy Fat Source (one portion)					
One Tbsp of non-hydrogenated unrefined oils	0	0	14	126	0
2 Tbsp "natural" peanut butter	8	5	16	190	2
2 Tbsp “natural” almond butter	6	5	16	185	2
¼ cup guacamole	2	6	14	144	4
¼ cup coconut milk	1	1	11	105	0
¼ cup deshelled sunflower seeds	7	4	15	168	3
¼ cup almonds	6	4	15	165	3
¼ cup walnuts	4	4	20	203	3

10.5 Importance of Infrequent Overfeeding

It's well established that in order to lose body fat, you need to bring your daily caloric intake below your maintenance level for a certain time period. At first you lose weight, then your progress slows, and then you hit a plateau where you seemingly can't lose any more weight. If you reduce your calorie intake even further, now you start to lose muscle in addition to losing fat due to your insufficient caloric intake. Again, that's not good because this will lower your metabolic rate, making it even harder to lose fat. Also, when you restrict your caloric intake for a period of time, your body starts to think that you're starving, and reacts by lowering your metabolic rate and increasing your appetite. Researchers believe that the reason your body does this relates to levels of a hormone in your body called leptin. The role leptin can seemingly play in keeping you lean is yet another reason not to banish carbohydrates from your diet, since occasionally overfeeding on carbohydrates can revamp your leptin levels.

If you're on reduced calorie diet, leptin levels will begin to fall in your body. When leptin levels fall in the body, this effectively reduces your RMR, triggers increased cortisol production (a catabolic hormone that promotes muscle loss and makes it hard to lose fat), and also increases your appetite, essentially promoting body fat gain. It's your body's defense mechanism because it thinks you are starving. To keep your leptin levels normal and hence keep your appetite sated and your RMR at optimal levels, it is helpful to have occasional over-feedings (particularly of carbohydrates). This could be one day a week where you forget all about your diet and eat whatever you want in whatever quantities you want. Most likely you're going to consume a lot of high carbohydrate foods, which will aid in increasing your leptin levels. Try to make the majority of your overfeeding day comprised of carbs, but avoid sodas or other sources of high fructose corn syrup. Also, try to go approximately 1000 calories higher than your maintenance caloric intake for the overfeeding day to assure a good response.

You could still lose a pound a week even with the overfeeding day. For example, if you stay at a 750-calorie/day deficit below your maintenance level during the other six days/week, and you're 1000 calories over your maintenance during the overfeeding day, that's still a 3500-calorie deficit for the week (+1000 - 750x6 = -3500). Since the overfeeding is only one day per week, it will not ruin the benefits of the other six days per week where you're following a good diet, and will actually supercharge your metabolic rate to make sure you keep your fat loss efforts on track. What you're actually doing is tricking

your body into thinking that food is plentiful once again and it doesn't have to lower your metabolic rate since it no longer thinks you're starving. Besides being important physiologically for maintaining continual fat loss, the overfeeding day is also very important mentally by giving you that one day a week to look forward to where you can overeat and not worry about it. Knowing that your overfeeding day is coming soon, you're able to stick to your diet throughout the week.

10.6 Meal Frequency and the Thermic Effect of Food

As I mentioned earlier, the total quantity of calories you expend on a daily basis is the sum of those required to support your RMR, those utilized for exercise and other daily activities, and those expended during the digestion and absorption of your meals (thermic effect of food). It is estimated that the thermic effect of food accounts for approximately 10% of your total calories expended daily. Protein has the highest thermic effect, followed by carbohydrates, and lastly, fats. This is one reason why I recommend including a portion of lean protein at each and every meal; so that you always get the benefit of increasing the calories expended through digestion. Eating a portion of protein with each meal also helps moderate the glycemic (blood sugar) response to the ingested carbs, and helps provide satiety.

Each time you eat a meal, you expend calories simply by digesting and absorbing that meal. Therefore, if you eat 5-6 small meals per day as opposed to the typical 2 or 3 meals per day, you are increasing your calorie expenditure simply by increasing your meal frequency. Eating 5-6 small meals per day means eating approximately every 3 waking hours throughout the day. It is important to note that you should never skip breakfast. You should eat first thing when you wake up in the morning to get your metabolism revved up again. If you go the entire morning without eating like many people do, your metabolism is running much slower than it should, and you're also putting yourself in a catabolic situation where your body will be breaking down muscle tissue for energy and to supply amino acids for other essential bodily functions.

Another reason that increasing your meal frequency is important towards losing body fat and promoting a lean body is that it helps to maintain a more stable and steady blood sugar throughout the day. This keeps your insulin levels more stable and allows you to be in a fat burning mode for more of the day. If you eat the traditional 2-3 large meals per day,

you have much bigger swings in your blood sugar and insulin levels. After a large meal, your blood sugar will spike much higher than compared to smaller meals, and the subsequent insulin surge will have your blood sugar crashing to lower than normal levels, leaving you hungry and fatigued until you eat your next feast. It is very hard to lose body fat when you're only eating 2-3 large meals per day. In addition to promoting a leaner body, eating 5-6 smaller meals throughout each day will also provide you with more consistent energy levels without the mood swings. To explain exactly what a small meal means, let's go back to the example of the guy that is trying to eat 2500 calories/day to lose fat. That would equate to 6 meals with approximately 400 calories per meal or 5 meals of approximately 500 calories per meal. Generally, most people are going to want to keep most of their meals between 300-600 calories for the maximum benefits.

10.7 Two Hidden Evils in our Food Supply

Two of the most evil products that are present in huge quantities in our food supply these days are high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and trans fats (hydrogenated oils, margarine, shortening). Both of these products are highly modified from their natural state by mass processing to satisfy economical and/or food preservation needs. This results in products that are much more harmful to our bodies than the original substance. The food manufacturers are only concerned with maximizing profits, and do not take into consideration the consumer's health, when they use these substances in mass quantities in our food supply. Not only do both of these products contribute significantly to promoting fat storage, but they also contribute to a host of other health problems. If you're serious about losing body fat and maintaining a lean and healthy body, you must avoid these two products as much as possible, if not altogether. The answer to avoiding these products is actually quite simple – don't buy processed foods! Choose whole natural foods instead and your body will thank you.

HFCS is used in almost every sweetened product on the market today. It's most prevalent in sodas, breakfast syrups, fruit juices, and any other sweetened beverages. HFCS is also found in ketchup, sweetened cereals, cakes, cookies, pasta sauces, barbeque sauces, salad dressings, and many other products. It began to be used in smaller quantities by food manufacturers in the 1970's. It has now become the number one sweetener used in most food products due to its comparatively low cost. Some health experts have even correlated the rise in the use of HFCS in our food supply with the rise in obesity, since they

have a remarkably similar trend. Although it's quite possible that there may be a link between the two, I don't fully agree with that assertion, since the population has also become much more sedentary over the years. The problem with HFCS is that it is not processed by our bodies in the same way as other sugars and tends to be more lipogenic (promotes fat storage). Also, your body doesn't readily recognize the calories ingested from HFCS, so it does nothing to satisfy your appetite. The bottom line is, if you want to be lean and ripped, stay away from the empty calories of HFCS. If you're need to buy sweetened products, look for products that use natural un-processed sweeteners like raw honey, molasses, or organic maple syrup and use them in moderation.

Another of the most evil substances introduced into our food supply has been trans fats in the form of partially and/or fully hydrogenated oils. Some trans fats do exist naturally in some foods (such as CLA in grass fed beef and milk) and are good for you, but the trans fats created through artificial hydrogenation are the ones to avoid if you care about your health. The process of hydrogenation essentially chemically alters unsaturated oil, which would be liquid at room temperature, and makes it more closely mimic a saturated fat, which is typically solid at room temperature. Even non-hydrogenated vegetable oils that are mass produced and heavily refined are not healthy choices. These oils are extracted under extremely high temperature and pressure using toxic solvents and bleaching aids in the extraction process. This process creates highly toxic oils full of free radicals that are then sold as cheap cooking oils or used in processed foods. Most vegetable oils you see on the supermarket shelves are processed in this highly toxic manner unless you see the words "unrefined", "virgin", or "extra virgin" on the label. These already toxic refined oils are made even worse when they are hydrogenated. In hydrogenation, the already toxic oils have a metal catalyst added to them and are again treated under high pressure and high temperature, and then steam cleaned and bleached. Now does that sound like something you should put in your body in even small quantities? Well, if you eat processed food, or fried restaurant food, you're putting it in your body in huge quantities!

In recent years, studies have shown that trans fats are the most harmful fats to our bodies and may be the main reason for the explosion of heart disease over the last 40-50 years. That is why you've probably heard health professionals recommend switching back to butter instead of margarine, even though for years they were mistakenly taught that margarine was healthier. The majority of processed foods contain hydrogenated fats. Hydrogenated oils will not only make you fat, but they also significantly increase your risk

of heart disease, diabetes, various forms of cancer, sexual dysfunction, and a host of other health conditions. The hydrogenated oils actually become part of your cell membranes, instead of the healthy fats that are supposed to comprise your cell membranes, essentially inhibiting and harming many of the cellular processes throughout your body. Make no mistake, consumption of trans fats contributes to body fat gain and will only inhibit your efforts to get lean. Avoid them at all costs; even on your overfeeding day.

Next time you're faced with the choice of those deep fried French fries, chicken fingers, potato chips, etc., just think twice about the internal damage you are going to do to your body and hopefully that will be enough to make you want to pass up those deep fried or processed foods that are loaded with trans. If you buy packaged and processed foods, in order to avoid trans fats, you must inspect the ingredients to assure that they don't contain partially or fully hydrogenated oils, shortening, or margarine of any kind. Just remember that (despite what the food manufacturers will try to claim in their ads) margarine made with hydrogenated oils is PURE EVIL, so stay away from anything made with margarine and choose butter instead! Also, you can pretty much assume that any deep fried foods are fried in hydrogenated or refined oils. That includes almost all chips, unless they say "baked" (and yes, tortilla chips are deep fried). Keep in mind that even if chips or other foods are fried in non-hydrogenated oil, they are still dangerous because they are refined oils. In order to help health conscious consumers avoid trans fats, the FDA mandated that food manufacturers change nutrition labels to include the grams of trans fat per serving starting January 2006. One of the easiest ways to avoid HFCS and trans fats is to shop at a store like Whole Foods Market (www.wholefoodsmarket.com) or other organic markets, which assure that all of their products are generally free from these types of nasty food additives.

10.8 The Importance of Dietary Calcium and Dairy for Staying Lean

It's a shame if you can't eat dairy due to lactose intolerance or difficulty with milk protein digestion, because you're missing out on one of the secret links to leanness. More and more scientific studies are linking increased dietary calcium to reduced body fat stores.

There are different theories as to why higher dietary calcium intakes may make us leaner. One theory that I've seen relates this to the high calcium diets eaten by our prehistoric ancestors. Low levels of calcium typically meant that they were entering a period of

famine, to which the body responded by increasing body fat storage and slowing the metabolism. A low calcium diet may still promote fat storage these days even though we are certainly never in a famine in developed nations. Another theory regarding how dietary calcium makes us leaner relates to a hormone in the body called calcitriol (a form of Vitamin D within the body that is actually a hormone). Research suggests that individuals not consuming sufficient dietary calcium may overproduce calcitriol which can promote fat storage in the body. Regardless of the mechanism, it appears abundantly clear that low dietary calcium intake promotes fat storage, while higher dietary calcium intake promotes a leaner body. It appears that dairy sources are the best for supplying your dietary calcium due to their higher bioavailability (ease of absorption) compared with other calcium sources.

As I mentioned previously, raw milk (unpasteurized and unhomogenized) is the healthiest variety of milk. However, since raw milk is mostly unavailable in the US, stick with low-fat or fat-free versions of dairy products, since the homogenized fat in full-fat dairy is unhealthy and the extra calories could thwart your fat loss progress. For those of you that are lactose intolerant, you must find alternative methods for maintaining higher levels of dietary calcium. A lactose intolerant individual may find that they can eat yogurt since the microorganisms in yogurt predigest the lactose for you. Also, there are low-lactose milks available such as Lactaid. The studies have indicated that supplemental calcium does not promote fat loss nearly as well as dairy calcium. This may also hold true for calcium fortified products like soy milk or orange juice as well since the calcium may not be as well absorbed. If you can eat dairy, try to consume at least 3-4 servings of low fat or fat free dairy per day to obtain the fat loss benefits. Some of the best choices are skim milk, cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, and yogurt. Other sources of calcium that may be beneficial are sardines with the bones, spinach, broccoli, and beans.

10.9 The Secret Fat Loss Benefits of Teas

Besides containing caffeine, several types of tea contain other compounds that can significantly enhance your fat loss efforts. Specifically, the teas that have been getting all of the attention for their fat loss benefits are green tea and oolong tea. Green tea and oolong tea contain substances called catechins and polyphenols, along with caffeine, and these substances work through several different mechanisms in our bodies to promote fat loss. Although black tea (the normal type of tea used for iced tea and the most common

tea sold) does contain caffeine and antioxidants, and may also help promote fat loss, I have yet to see any studies relating black tea to fat loss. Another promising tea that I've seen referenced as potentially having some properties that promote fat loss is white tea. White tea is a little harder to find, but including it in your tea blend may be beneficial.

The supplement manufacturers have caught on to the tea craze over the last few years, and if you've noticed, almost every fat burner supplement on the market now contains green tea extract. Studies have shown that the compounds in green tea and oolong tea stimulate thermogenesis (conversion of fat to heat), helping you to lose body fat. It has been found that green tea and oolong tea can increase your metabolic rate significantly, while also promoting an increase in the percentage of fat utilized for energy. They basically help to promote a shift in your metabolism by reducing the quantity of carbohydrates used for energy and increasing the amount of fat used for energy. In addition, green and oolong teas contain compounds that slow the digestion of carbohydrates, thus promoting a lower blood sugar response to meals, so you store less glucose as body fat. Also, a compound found in oolong tea has been noted to inhibit the quantity of fat that is digested from a meal, meaning that you're absorbing less calories.

There is ample evidence showing that green, oolong, and even white teas work through multiple mechanisms in your body to promote fat loss and a leaner body. To give you an extra fat loss advantage, I recommend brewing batches of a mixture of green, oolong, and white teas and refrigerate this as iced tea. If you have to sweeten it, use a non-caloric sweetener so you're not adding extra sugar calories to your diet. Stevia is a good natural non-caloric sweetener that is not chemically processed like artificial sweeteners. Also, unless you have to avoid caffeine for some reason, I'd recommend staying away from the decaffeinated teas, since the caffeine contributes to some of the fat burning effect. A strategy you may want to try is drinking a glass of the iced tea mixture with each of your first three meals of the day (no later than mid-afternoon, so as not to interfere with your sleep at night). From my experience, you'll see a noticeably quicker fat loss when you start adding 3 or 4 cups of this tea mixture to your diet on a daily basis. Again, if you're eating too many total calories, none of this will matter, and you won't see an increased fat loss.

Also, don't waste your money on the fat burner pills with green tea extracts. They're way overpriced, and you're better off getting the tea the way you were meant to get it…by brewing it yourself.

10.10 Summary of Dietary Strategies

To summarize, here are the dietary strategies you can implement to promote body fat reduction and a lean body:

- Eat 5-6 small meals per day of relatively equal proportions; you should try to eat a meal about every three waking hours
- Plan all of your meals for each entire week; only choose the items you need for your planned meals when you're at the grocery store (if you don't have junk around the house, you most likely won't eat junk)
- Calculate your daily caloric requirements to lose weight; don't obsess over calories, but try to stay approximately where you need to be to lose weight
- Eat a portion of lean protein at each meal, along with a portion of fibrous healthy carbohydrates, and a portion of healthy fats
- Focus on unrefined, unprocessed foods in their natural state
- Focus on lower glycemic index carbohydrate sources for the majority of your meals, but don't worry about avoiding healthy higher glycemic index choices like bananas, raisins, and carrots; these foods have beneficial nutrients and the glycemic response can be controlled if the portions are kept low and combined properly with other foods
- Eat higher glycemic index carbohydrate sources (sugars and lower fiber complex carbs) along with protein immediately after your intense workouts to replenish muscle glycogen and start the muscle repair process; a 2:1 to 4:1 ratio of carbs to protein immediately following your workouts best facilitates the recovery process
- Avoid fad diets or "crash" diets
- Do not create an energy deficit exceeding 1000 calories per day (i.e. if your maintenance caloric intake is 3000 cal/day, never go below 2000 cal/day); a 500-750 calorie/day energy deficit is best for fat loss while maintaining muscle; as a general rule, it is never recommended that females go below 1200 calories/day and males should never go below 1600 calories/day
- Try to incorporate an overfeeding day once per week to stimulate your metabolism and to help you stay on a focused diet for the other six days per week
- Avoid refined oils, trans fats, and high fructose corn syrup at all costs

- Try to include green, oolong, and white teas into your daily diet to promote a leaner body; try the suggestion of mixing all three of these teas into an iced tea mixture and drinking it throughout the first half of each day
- As long as you're not lactose intolerant, include at least 3-4 servings of dairy and other sources of dietary calcium into your daily plan to promote fat loss

10.11 Healthy Balanced Meal Plan Ideas/Examples

I've included the following examples of daily diet breakdowns in this section to show you what a healthy diet (which will promote fat loss) looks like. Remember, these are only examples, and I in no way promote following these examples exactly. Each individual will respond differently than others to specific diets and you need to find what works best for you. These are just basic examples that I've found to work well for me. I included an example for both a training day and a non-training day.

These example meal plans on the next 2 pages were geared for the 190-lb male that was described earlier and are at an approximate 2400-2500 calorie goal for fat loss. Remember to adjust the calories to your individual calculated level (from section 4.0 of this book or from the metabolic rate calculator – the 2nd bonus at this page http://truthaboutabs.com/freebonus) that you need for fat loss (if that is your goal).

In addition, following the next two pages which contain 12 meal ideas, I've provided an additional 72 different meal plan examples that should give you lots of ideas to work with. Of course, everybody is different and will have different tastes, but the point is to give you ideas on the types of foods that are healthiest and how to balance everything into meals that will maintain your hormonal balance and proper blood sugar levels, and prevent cravings.

Example Training Day Diet (fat loss example diet for 2400 calorie goal)

(follow a similar diet 6 days/week; then have one overfeeding day)

Meals	Protein (grams)	Carbohydrate (grams)	Fat (grams)	Calories (kcal)	Fiber (grams)
Breakfast					
egg sandwich (1 egg, one sliced medium sized chicken sausage link, one slice cheese, on whole wheat english muffin or whole grain bread)	24	30	14	330	4
1 kiwi	1	12	0	46	2
water or green tea unsweetened					
Mid morning meal					
1/2 cup fat free ricotta cheese mixed with one cup vanilla yogurt, 1/2 cup frozen fruit of choice (thawed) and 1/4 cup chopped walnuts	30	48	20	474	6
water					
Early afternoon meal					
whole wheat sandwich (1/5 lb lean meat: turkey breast, roast beef, lean ham, chicken breast, or tuna, lettuce, spinach, and very little light mayo)	28	35	12	339	7
1 piece of fruit (grapefruit, kiwi, mango, etc)	1	23	0	84	4
water					
Late afternoon meal					
1/4 cup chopped pecans, 1/4 cup raisins, 1 hard boiled egg	12	32	24	377	5
Late-Day Training Session					
Post-training recovery meal					
Post-workout recovery shake with 1 frozen banana, 2 Tbsp pure maple syrup, 20 grams whey protein powder, 1 cup skim milk	30	67	0.5	386.5	2
Dinner					
1/4 lb organic lean meat (eye round steak, chicken breast, pork tenderloin, fish, etc)	26	0	5	149	
1 small-medium ear of corn	3	26	2	122	4
steamed vegetables (as much as you want)	2	8	0	34	2
spinach salad with olive oil dressing	1	8	10	120	2
water					
Totals for day	158	289	87.5	2461.5	38

Macronutrient Profile

Protein	25.7%
Carbohydrates (fiber excluded from calorie count)	42.3%
Fat	32.0%

Example Non-Training Day Diet (fat loss example diet for 2400 calorie goal)

(follow a similar diet 6 days/week; then have one overfeeding day)

Meals	Protein (grams)	Carbohydrate (grams)	Fat (grams)	Calories (kcal)	Fiber (grams)
Breakfast					
1 cup high fiber cereal (at least 5-6 gms/serving), 1 cup skim milk, 5-6 sliced strawberries	14	64	1	300	7
2 whole eggs, any style, one slice cheese	16	0	13	181	0
water or unsweetened iced tea mixture					
Mid morning meal					
3/4 cup cottage cheese mixed with 3/4 cup vanilla yogurt, 1/4 cup Fiber One cereal, 1/2 cup frozen berries, and 1/4 cup slivered almonds	37	46	16	446	10
water or unsweetened iced tea mixture					
Early afternoon meal					
whole wheat wrap with 1/5 lb chicken breast, diced avocado, salsa, lettuce, little cheese	30	30	12	330	6
1 piece of fruit (apple, orange, pear, etc)	1	23	0	84	4
water or unsweetened iced tea mixture					
Late afternoon meal					
2 Tbsp peanut butter on 1 slice whole grain bread, topped with fresh berries	12	25	16	274	6
one cup skim milk	8	12	0	80	0
Dinner					
1/4 lb lean organic meat (eye round steak, chicken breast, pork tenderloin, fish, etc)	26	0	5	149	0
1/2 large sweet potato with little butter, cinnamon	2	29	5	160	3
steamed vegetables (as much as you want)	2	8	0	34	2
mixed greens salad with 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil and 1-2 tbsp balsamic vinegar	1	10	14	164	2
water					
Late night snack					
½ cup 1% cottage cheese with pineapple and ¼ cup coconut milk mixed in	16	20	11	237	2
Totals for day	165	267	93	2439	42

Macronutrient Profile

Protein	27.1%
Carbohydrates (fiber excluded from calorie count)	38.6%
Fat	34.3%

72 Additional Lean-Body Meal Ideas

Remember, healthy eating doesn't need to be boring or tasteless! There's also no reason it needs to be "low-carb" or "low-fat" per se. All of the following meal examples on the next 3 pages are healthy meal ideas that are balanced with proteins, carbohydrates, and healthy fats.

Make sure to adjust total calories to your specific caloric goal. All of these daily caloric totals are around 2000 calories/day, which may be too high for some people, and way too low for others.

Daily Example #1	Daily Example #2	Daily Example #3	Daily Example #4
Breakfast: 3 egg omelete with whole eggs, mushrooms, onions, peppers, and cheese	Breakfast: one large link venison or chicken sausage	Breakfast: Pina Colada shake: blend one scoop vanilla protein powder (20 g prot), 1.5 cups skim milk, 1 cup frzn pineapple, 1/4 cup heavy coconut milk	Breakfast: 2 cantaloupe halves with 1 cup 1% cottage cheese
one medium link lean chicken sausage	2 slices whole grain toast with whipped butter		one cup green tea with 1/2 tbsp raw honey
one orange	2 whole eggs any style		
one cup green tea w/stevia	one cup oolong tea w/stevia		
Prot: 36, Carb: 29, Fib: 5, Fat: 19, Cal: 410	Prot: 33, Carb: 30, Fib: 6, Fat: 25, Cal: 459	Prot: 33, Carb: 43, Fib: 2, Fat: 12, Cal: 406	Prot: 32, Carb: 50, Fib: 5, Fat: 3, Cal: 340
Mid-Morning Meal: 1 cup 1% cott cheese mixed with one ripe sliced banana and 1/4 c chopped walnuts	Mid-Morning Meal: 1 cup 1% cott cheese mixed with one 8 oz yogurt and 1/4 cup chopped pecans	Mid-Morning Meal: 3 hard boiled eggs and one large orange	Mid-Morning Meal: high fiber rye crackers with 1/4 cup hommus; 2-3 cubes of swiss cheese; 1 peach
Prot: 36, Carb: 38, Fib: 6, Fat: 22, Cal: 476	Prot: 44, Carb: 30, Fib: 4, Fat: 22, Cal: 482	Prot: 20, Carb: 25, Fib: 5, Fat: 14, Cal: 291	Prot: 14, Carb: 45, Fib: 10, Fat: 9, Cal: 300
Lunch: chicken guacamole whole wheat wrap: 4 oz chicken breast sliced, w/w wrap, 2 tbsp gaucamole, lettuce, tomato	Lunch: chicken guacamole whole wheat pita: 4 oz chicken breast sliced, w/w pita, 2 tbsp gaucamole, lettuce, tomato	Lunch: Grilled chicken salad with 4 oz chicken, olive oil vinagrette dressing, 1 slice whole grain toast with whipped butter	Lunch: Tuna melts: 1 can tuna with olive oil and chopped onions, 1 whole wheat muffin, 2 slices cheese
Prot: 32, Carb: 40, Fib: 6, Fat: 17, Cal: 423	Prot: 32, Carb: 42, Fib: 8, Fat: 17, Cal: 425	Prot: 32, Carb: 30, Fib: 7, Fat: 18, Cal: 389	Prot: 49, Carb: 32, Fib: 5, Fat: 15, Cal: 440
Mid-Afternoon Meal: 6-oz container Stonyfield Farms fat free yogurt with 1 tbsp wheat germ, 2 tbsp sunflower seeds, and 2 tbsp sliced almonds	Mid-Afternoon Meal: one slice whole grain toast with 2 tbsp natural peanut butter, 1 tbsp reduced sugar jam, and 1 cup skim milk	Mid-Afternoon Meal: 1/4 cup macadamia nuts, 20 gram small piece dark bittersweet chocolate (70% or more cocoa content), 1 c skim milk	Mid-Afternoon Meal: 1 sliced apple with 2 tbsp natural peanut butter and 1 cup skim milk
Prot: 14, Carb: 34, Fib: 8, Fat: 16, Cal: 312	Prot: 20, Carb: 40, Fib: 5, Fat: 17, Cal: 378	Prot: 12, Carb: 24, Fib: 4, Fat: 28, Cal: 384	Prot: 18, Carb: 40, Fib: 6, Fat: 17, Cal: 370
Dinner: 4 oz bison burger on whole wheat roll, one slice 2% cheese	Dinner: 4 oz lean turkey burger on whole wheat roll, one slice 2% cheese	Dinner: Garlic chicken sausage large link with 2 oz whole grain pasta, 1/2 cup marinara, 1 tbsp parm	Dinner: 4 oz baked orange roughy, small serving mixed brown rice and lentils
one cup peas & carrots	spinach and carrot salad with lite balsamic dressing		steamed broccoli
iced rooibos tea	water	water	iced rooibos tea
Prot: 42, Carb: 40, Fib: 9, Fat: 13, Cal: 418	Prot: 38, Carb: 38, Fib: 7, Fat: 14, Cal: 409	Prot: 28, Carb: 46, Fib: 8, Fat: 10, Cal: 362	Prot: 35, Carb: 33, Fib: 8, Fat: 6, Cal: 300
Late Night Meal: 1/2 cup 1% cottage cheese mixed with 1 cup frozen or fresh blueberries	Late Night Meal: 1/2 cup fat free ricotta cheese with 1 cup frozen or fresh strawberries	Late Night Meal: 4 oz cold shrimp with cocktail sauce	Late Night Meal: 1 scoop protein (preferably casein or hemp instead of whey) with 1 c milk
Prot: 18, Carb: 20, Fib: 4, Fat: 2, Cal: 156	Prot: 18, Carb: 24, Fib: 4, Fat: 0.5, Cal: 161	Prot: 22, Carb: 12, Fib: 1, Fat: 1, Cal: 142	Prot: 28, Carb: 14, Fib: 0, Fat: 1, Cal: 180
Total Daily Calories: 2200	Total Daily Calories: 2300	Total Daily Calories: 2000	Total Daily Calories: 1950

Daily Example #5	Daily Example #6	Daily Example #7	Daily Example #8
Breakfast: 1/4 cup Arrowhead Mills steel cut oats with 1/2 tbsp raw honey, 1/4 cup almonds, and 1/2 cup mixed berries 2 whole eggs any style one cup white tea w/stevia	Breakfast: 3 whole eggs scrambled with peppers, onions, zucchini, and lowfat cheese 1 cup Kashi Good Friends Cinna-Raisin cereal w/ 1 cup skim milk one cup green tea w/stevia	Breakfast: power pancakes: mix 1 c egg whites, 3/4 c dry oats, 1/2 c cott cheese, 2 tbsp milk, 1/2 tsp vanilla in blender; cook; top with berries or jam 2 small links turkey saus. one cup oolong tea w/stevia	Breakfast: chocolate banana peanut butter protein shake: 1.5 cups skim milk, 1 scoop chocolate protein powder (~20g prot), 1 frozen banana, 1 tbsp peanut butter, 2 tbsp coconut milk
Prot: 27, Carb: 50, Fib: 13, Fat: 27, Cal: 512	Prot: 34, Carb: 55, Fib: 12, Fat: 15, Cal: 450	Prot: 55, Carb: 56, Fib: 7, Fat: 10, Cal: 513	Prot: 39, Carb: 48, Fib: 5, Fat: 15, Cal: 468
Mid-Morning Meal: a dozen baby carrots with 1/4 cup (4 tbsp) hommus; 1 cup skim milk	Mid-Morning Meal: 1/4 cup dry roasted peanuts and 1 pear	Mid-Morning Meal: 1 slice whole grain toast w/ 2 T almond butter, 1 T reduced sugar jam, and 1 c skim milk	Mid-Morning Meal: celery sticks with 2 tbsp natural peanut butter and 1 cup skim milk
Prot: 15, Carb: 32, Fib: 8, Fat: 5, Cal: 209	Prot: 10, Carb: 30, Fib: 7, Fat: 18, Cal: 301	Prot: 20, Carb: 40, Fib: 5, Fat: 17, Cal: 379	Prot: 17, Carb: 20, Fib: 5, Fat: 17, Cal: 286
Lunch: roast beef sandwich: 4 oz roast beef, 1 slice 2% cheese, 2 slices w/w bread, light mayo, lettuce, tomato, mustard	Lunch: chicken pita pizza: whole wheat pita base topped with 3 oz chicken breast sliced, sauce, 2% mozz cheese, diced peppers	Lunch: chicken caesar whole wheat wrap: 4 oz chicken breast sliced, w/w wrap, 1 tbsp lowfat caesar dressing, spinach, tomato	Lunch: 4 oz grilled salmon over large tossed salad with balsamic and olive oil dressing
Prot: 37, Carb: 38, Fib: 7, Fat: 13, Cal: 396	Prot: 33, Carb: 49, Fib: 7, Fat: 12, Cal: 415	Prot: 32, Carb: 40, Fib: 6, Fat: 12, Cal: 378	Prot: 30, Carb: 15, Fib: 4, Fat: 20, Cal: 348
Mid-Afternoon Meal: whole grain pita with sliced avocado and 1/2 cup canned wild salmon; one ripe kiwi	Mid-Afternoon Meal: pina colada cottage cheese: 1 cup 1% cottage cheese with 1/4 cup coconut milk and 1 cup crushed pineapple	Mid-Afternoon Meal: 1/2 cup fat free or 1% ricotta cheese mixed with 1 cup seedless grapes, and 1/4 cup slivered almonds	Mid-Afternoon Meal: one cup lowfat vanilla yogurt mixed with 1/4 cup Fiber One cereal and 1/4 cup pecans
Prot: 30, Carb: 36, Fib: 7, Fat: 15, Cal: 375	Prot: 33, Carb: 27, Fib: 3, Fat: 13, Cal: 339	Prot: 22, Carb: 40, Fib: 4, Fat: 16, Cal: 380	Prot: 15, Carb: 49, Fib: 10, Fat: 22, Cal: 424
Dinner: 4 oz pork tenderloin with 1 tbsp bbq sauce spinach salad with 1 tbsp olive oil, 2 tbsp balsamic steamed asparagus	Dinner: 4 oz lean beef filet mignon one small baked sweet potato, butter, cinnamon steamed broccoli	Dinner: approx. 2 cups homemade turkey or buffalo chili: meat, beans, tomatoes, peppers, onions, seasoning salad with olive oil dressing	Dinner: chicken fajitas: whole wheat tortillas, chicken breast, onion, peppers, salsa, low fat cheddar, low fat sour cream, guacamole unsweetened iced tea
Prot: 30, Carb: 25, Fib: 6, Fat: 20, Cal: 382	Prot: 33, Carb: 35, Fib: 7, Fat: 18, Cal: 413	Prot: 32, Carb: 50, Fib: 10, Fat: 16, Cal: 442	Prot: 40, Carb: 55, Fib: 8, Fat: 19, Cal: 527
Late Night Meal: 1 cup 1% cottage cheese with 1/2 of a sliced apple, cinnamon, and stevia	Late Night Meal: small portion (~20g) dark chocolate (>70% cocoa), 1 cup skim milk	Late Night Meal: 8 oz plain full fat yogurt with stevia, and 1/2 cup berries	Late Night Meal: 1 Breakstone Cottage Double
Prot: 33, Carb: 20, Fib: 3, Fat: 2, Cal: 221	Prot: 10, Carb: 20, Fib: 3, Fat: 8, Cal: 183	Prot: 9, Carb: 22, Fib: 2, Fat: 8, Cal: 190	Prot: 13, Carb: 18, Fib: 0.5, Fat: 2, Cal: 145
Total Daily Calories: 2100	Total Daily Calories: 2050	Total Daily Calories: 2280	Total Daily Calories: 2200

Daily Example #9	Daily Example #10	Daily Example #11	Daily Example #12
Breakfast: 3 scrambled eggs with 1 diced baby potato, diced onion, spinach, and 1/4 cup shredded reduced fat cheddar	Breakfast: breakfast sandwich with whole wheat muffin, 1 egg, 1 slice 2% cheese, one slice canadian bacon 1/2 grapefruit	Breakfast: antioxidant shake: 1 cup frozen mixed berries, 1 cup skim milk, 1/2 cup vanilla yogurt, 1/4 cup coconut milk, 1 tbsp wheat germ, stevia to sweeten	Breakfast: one 6-inch southwestern style chicken sausage diced and fried in 1 tsp. butter with 1/2 small onion, 1/2 red pepper, one small purple potato, and 2 eggs
one cup white tea with 1/2 tbsp raw honey	one cup skim milk 1 cup rooibos tea w/stevia		one cup oolong tea with 1/2 tbsp raw honey
Prot: 29, Carb: 28, Fib: 3, Fat: 20, Cal: 399	Prot: 29, Carb: 54, Fib: 6, Fat: 10, Cal: 404	Prot: 16, Carb: 54, Fib: 5, Fat: 13, Cal: 382	Prot: 27, Carb: 36, Fib: 4, Fat: 18, Cal: 402
Mid-Morning Meal: 1 ripe mango sliced into 1 cup plain full fat yogurt	Mid-Morning Meal: 1/2 cantaloupe with 1 cup 1% cottage cheese	Mid-Morning Meal: 1 slice whole rye toast with 2 T cashew butter, topped w/ fresh blackberries	Mid-Morning Meal: 1/4 cup sunflower seeds (no shells) mixed with 1/4 cup raisins
Prot: 10, Carb: 35, Fib: 3, Fat: 8, Cal: 243	Prot: 31, Carb: 30, Fib: 4, Fat: 2, Cal: 250	Prot: 10, Carb: 33, Fib: 6, Fat: 18, Cal: 316	Prot: 9, Carb: 32, Fib: 5, Fat: 15, Cal: 280
Lunch: spinach salad with 4 oz diced chicken, 1/8 c pecans, 1/8 c dried cranberries, 1/8 c feta cheese, lite balsamic vinagrette dressing	Lunch: 3 oz. diced chicken breast, 1/2 of a diced avocado, 1/4 cup shredded light cheddar, and 1/4 cup salsa on whole grain tortilla	Lunch: 4 oz cooked shrimp, diced cilantro, diced onions, 1/2 of a diced avocado, salsa, and squeeze of fresh lime on 2 soft corn tortillas	Lunch: 2 rolls sushi of choice (12 pieces); 1/2 cup red grapes
Prot: 31, Carb: 26, Fib: 6, Fat: 22, Cal: 408	Prot: 37, Carb: 38, Fib: 10, Fat: 20, Cal: 450	Prot: 34, Carb: 35, Fib: 9, Fat: 15, Cal: 384	Prot: 23, Carb: 70, Fib: 4, Fat: 15, Cal: 495
Mid-Afternoon Meal: 1 banana with 2 tbsp natural peanut butter and 1 cup skim milk	Mid-Afternoon Meal: 6-oz container Stonyfield Farms lowfat yogurt with 2 tbsp freshly ground flax seed, and 2 tbsp walnuts	Mid-Afternoon Meal: 1/4 cup pistachios and one ripe peach	Mid-Afternoon Meal: smoked salmon on whole grain crackers; 1 nectarine
Prot: 18, Carb: 44, Fib: 6, Fat: 17, Cal: 383	Prot: 15, Carb: 30, Fib: 7, Fat: 18, Cal: 321	Prot: 9, Carb: 30, Fib: 7, Fat: 15, Cal: 270	Prot: 18, Carb: 35, Fib: 6, Fat: 5, Cal: 235
Dinner: 3-4 turkey or lean beef meatballs on sauteed onions, peppers, mushrooms, zucchini, and 1/2 c tomato sauce, topped with 1/4 c mozz	Dinner: 4 oz lean buffalo steak small salad with olive oil/vinegar one ear corn on cob	Dinner: 4 oz yellowfin tuna filet 1 cup cooked seasoned brown rice 1 cup steamed snow peas	Dinner: Tuna casserole: mix 1 can tuna with 1 serving cooked whole wheat rotini (2 oz. dry), 1/2 c. frzn peas, 1/2 can cream of mush. soup 1 cup rooibos tea w/stevia
Prot: 40, Carb: 30, Fib: 5, Fat: 18, Cal: 427	Prot: 33, Carb: 33, Fib: 7, Fat: 13, Cal: 360	Prot: 33, Carb: 51, Fib: 7, Fat: 10, Cal: 405	Prot: 45, Carb: 50, Fib: 10, Fat: 11, Cal: 449
Late Night Meal: 2 oz. kippered herring on a couple whole grain crackers	Late Night Meal: 1/4 cup cashews, one cup chamomile tea sweetened with 1/2 tbsp raw honey	Late Night Meal: 3 oz. grilled chicken breast strips dipped in Thai peanut sauce	Late Night Meal: 1/2 cup ricotta mixed with 1 tbsp cocoa powder, stevia sweetener, few choc chips
Prot: 16, Carb: 15, Fib: 3, Fat: 7, Cal: 178	Prot: 5, Carb: 12, Fib: 2, Fat: 17, Cal: 215	Prot: 24, Carb: 9, Fib: 0, Fat: 10, Cal: 222	Prot: 15, Carb: 15, Fib: 1, Fat: 13, Cal: 234
Total Daily Calories: 2040	Total Daily Calories: 2000	Total Daily Calories: 1980	Total Daily Calories: 2100

11.0 ADDITIONAL LEAN BODY TIPS

Reduce Stress

High levels of physical and emotional stress increase your levels of the catabolic hormone cortisol. Excess cortisol can cause muscle breakdown and lead to increased body fat storage. Make sure to take time each day to relax and relieve stress. It will go a long way to helping you obtain the lean body you desire. Some people swear by yoga or qigong as a means of reducing stress, while for others it may be as simple as sitting in a hot tub or lying in a hammock at the end of a stressful day.

To get the best results though, you should try not to get stressed in the first place. Try not to let the everyday hassles get you stressed. You'll have much less stress if, for example, you simply calm down and shrug off the jerk that cut you off on your commute or the slow service at the restaurant, etc. Every time you feel yourself starting to get stressed about a situation, just take a moment to relax and realize that if you don't get stressed, you will be helping yourself to get leaner.

Another technique that helps to reduce stress on a daily basis is to take about 30-60 seconds a few times throughout each busy day to just relax, close your eyes, and breathe deeply and slowly. Feel the slow, deep breaths going in and out, and imagine yourself at a place that relaxes you (such as lying on a tropical beach, sitting by a scenic waterfall, taking in the fresh air and scenic beauty on top of a mountain, or whatever environment relaxes you). Do this a couple times throughout each day and you'll find that it's a very powerful way to reduce stress and only takes a minute or so.

Get Adequate Sleep

As if your doctor and everyone else haven't already told you this, it is important to realize that adequate sleep is a huge factor in determining how well your body recovers from exercise, how well you manage stress, and how good you feel each day. Studies show that even if you get just one or two hours less sleep than you need on a given night, your cortisol levels could be substantially higher, which again can lead to muscle loss and fat gain. Most people need between 7-8 hours of sleep each night for their body to operate at its highest efficiency. I know a lot of people that claim that they can "get by" with only 4-5 hours of sleep per night. They seem to think that they are being "tough" by sleeping less

than what they need. What they don't realize is that they are just encouraging more ab flab and a host of other problems by not getting enough sleep.

Stay Well Hydrated

Try to drink water throughout the day. Many professionals recommend at least 8-10 glasses per day, or a gallon or more for active athletes. Personally, I don't think you need to actually measure and try to get some preset amount of water each day. Just keep water with you at all times, and keep sipping on it all day long when you're thirsty. You'll know if you're hydrated enough by whether your urine is clear or dark yellow. You want it to be clear to very light yellow. If it starts to get darker, make sure you chug down some water.

Staying well hydrated allows your body to operate efficiently, burn fat properly, maintain maximum exercise performance, and helps suppress your appetite so you don't overeat. Avoid sweetened drinks such as sodas and juices as the extra calories will usually just be deposited as body fat. Drinking just plain water and some unsweetened teas throughout the day is the best way to go.

Avoid High Sodium Foods

A high sodium diet will increase your water retention leaving you looking bloated and fatter than you really are. Controlling your sodium intake will also help your body to operate more efficiently and burn fat easier by maintaining proper hydration. Also, if you do eat higher sodium foods, it will help to also consume some high potassium food such as fruits and unprocessed vegetables to help maintain a proper electrolyte balance. It will be easier for you to avoid high sodium foods by just avoiding processed foods such as canned foods or prepared foods. Almost all processed foods are heavily laden with salt, in addition to trans fats and high fructose corn syrup many times as well.

Limit Alcohol Consumption

The occasional night out of drinking isn't going to kill your efforts to get lean, but getting wrecked almost every night will definitely bring on the abdominal fat. Studies have shown that frequent alcohol consumption leads to increased fat storage (particularly in the abdominal region). One study I've reviewed compared a large group of people divided

into recreational drinkers vs. non-drinkers. The study concluded that the recreational drinkers had two to three times more abdominal fat on average than the non-drinkers. This is partly due to the effect of alcohol on hormonal balance and also simply due to the massive quantities of empty calories consumed through binge drinking. I know many of us (including myself) love to party it up and go out drinking, but keeping the heavy drinking to no more than one night a week is a good idea if you're serious about getting lean.

If you're the kind of person that just likes to have a glass of wine or a single beer with dinner every night, you should do just fine with that. Studies I've reviewed on moderate drinkers (1-2 drinks per day) compared to binge drinkers, showed that the moderate drinkers were able to improve their health and remain lean. My take on it is that if you want to have one drink a day with a meal, it's not going to set you back… the quantity of calories are simply too low. Plus, you may actually be receiving some benefit from a drink a day due to the beneficial antioxidants in wine, etc.

Eat Organic

The pesticides, hormones, and other chemicals used in producing our food supply can accumulate in your body over time. This makes it even harder for your body to get rid of fat stores. Organically raised food (produce, grains, meat, dairy, etc.) is produced without the use of pesticides, fertilizers, hormones, or other artificial chemicals. Basing your diet around as much organic food as possible will aid in getting rid of stubborn body fat. Organic food might be slightly more costly than normal food, but you get what you pay for. As demand grows for organically produced food, prices will continue to come down. Some specialty grocery stores like Trader Joes (www.traderjoes.com) sell a portion of their products as organic, and have very reasonable prices.

12.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING ABS AND BODY FAT

Q: I've heard that in order to lose body fat and get lean, I can't eat after 6 or 7 pm. Is this true?

A: No. If you eat small balanced meals throughout the day, and never skip meals, you'll maintain more stable blood sugar levels, burn more fat, maintain stable energy levels, provide a consistent amino acid supply for bodily functions including muscle repair, and

reduce the amount of time you are in a catabolic (muscle wasting) state. Small meals or snacks late at night are fine as long as you keep your daily caloric intake in your proper range for your goals.

If you don't eat anything after 6 or 7 pm, you're going a long time without food since you won't eat until the morning. This puts your body in a catabolic state in the overnight hours. A small meal (maybe a little higher on the protein for this meal) late at night will provide amino acids to your body to minimize catabolism throughout the night. A long lasting protein source like casein (such as in cottage cheese or some protein powders) is great for late night. Whey protein (although it is a good post-workout protein) would not be a good late night protein because of how fast it is digested and processed by the body. Avoid overdosing on the carbs late at night as you want to minimize insulin production at this time.

Q: Is it true that doing morning cardio on an empty stomach is the best way to lose body fat?

A: Not entirely. A lot of trainers and magazines do recommend this. I, however, don't recommend morning cardio on an empty stomach. The reasoning is that when you wake up in the morning, you are in a catabolic state where your body is breaking down muscle tissue to provide amino acids for many different processes and to help supply energy along with fat stores. You are probably going to burn a higher percentage of fat if you do cardio training first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. However, you may also lose some muscle if you do this on a regular basis, which will ultimately lower your metabolic rate, making it easier to store fat in the long run. Personally, I have not seen great results with people trying morning cardio on an empty stomach. If you want, give it a try and see if it works for you. However, I recommend against it based on experience.

If you love working out in the morning, go right ahead, but I'd recommend at least taking in a little bit of protein and carbs beforehand (such as a half scoop of whey protein and a small serving of fruit) to reverse the catabolic state that you are in first thing in the morning. That way, you'll have more energy for the workout, plus you won't burn away your hard earned muscle.

Q: Isn't it true that I have to do lots of side bends, torso twists, and other oblique work to get rid of my love handles and give me a smaller waist?

A: No. Realize that when you are doing exercises where you attempt to isolate your sides, you are not reducing the body fat on your love handles. The myth of spot reduction has been dead for years now, yet many people still believe that working a certain area of your body burns fat from that specific area. This is not how it works. Your body burns fat from throughout your bodily stores, when it needs it for energy. This is why I don't recommend wasting too much of your time in the gym training small muscle groups like the abs and obliques (they need to be trained, but it never has to take more than about 5-10 minutes).

You will burn many more calories and cause a much greater metabolic rate increase by spending most of your time in the gym working the larger muscle groups of the body such as the legs, back, and chest. Also, it may be possible to over-develop the obliques and give yourself bigger muscular love handles through heavy weighted side bends and other weighted oblique work.

While some fitness professionals will disagree with this assertion, saying that it is impossible to build bulky muscular love handles, I have seen some examples of people that were extremely lean, yet still had the appearance of big love handles. I have no proof of this…it is simply my observation. My recommendation is to continue to train the obliques, but avoid the really heavily weighted oblique exercises like weighted side bends. The exercises I've provided in this program will promote sufficient oblique development without producing bulky muscular love handles.

Q: I've heard that fat loss supplements and meal replacement shakes are the best ways to lose fat. Is that true?

A: No! Most supplements are pure garbage. Most pills, serums, prohormones, and powders are just a waste of money and will not help you get leaner faster. You'd be much better off spending the money you would have wasted on supplements on a good personal trainer or a bunch of good fitness books by some of the best fitness pros in the world.

As for meal replacement shakes, the only value I see in them is for convenience if you don't have real food readily available or don't have the time to make 5-6 real food meals

every day. Whole natural food is always healthier for you than any kind of processed protein shake or bar. The shakes and protein bars are usually better than junk food though if you need them purely for convenience. The best types of bars are actually whole food bars such as fruit and nut bars. Many organic food markets sell food bars (made of natural ingredients like crushed nuts, nut butters, dates, raisins, coconut, whole grains, various fibers, etc.) that are much healthier snacks than most processed protein bars on the market.

Q: Isn't it true that I can eat whatever and whenever I want, as long as I workout every day?

A: You could, but you would never get lean enough to see your abs. You could workout for hours each day, 7 days a week (although this would be some serious over-training), and still not get lean enough to see your abs if your diet is horrendous. Once you follow a healthy diet that promotes fat loss, you'll be amazed at how quickly you lose body fat.

Q: Isn't it best to train abs more frequently than other muscle groups?

A: No. It's just a waste of time and will not give you better abs, and could even over-train your abs. While there are some slight differences between different muscle groups of the body in terms of their composition of fast twitch and slow twitch muscle fibers, there is no valid reason to train different muscle groups more frequently than others. I recommend training abs twice/week for development. Once you have well-developed abs, you could even get away with training them only once/week to maintain them.

Again, most of your time should be devoted to full body lifts like snatches, swings, lunges, deadlifts, squats, clean & presses, high pulls, etc. to burn the most calories, stimulate the greatest hormonal response, and promote the best increase in your metabolic rate. Most of these lifts call on the abs and other core muscles for stabilization, so your abs are indirectly getting worked anyway. This is the **true secret** to getting a ripped body with visible six pack abs, instead of wasting so much time doing hundreds of crunches and sit-ups in which you simply don't get that same stimulation which makes changes throughout your entire body.

Q: I want to do high reps to "tone" my abs, since more resistance and lower reps will just add size to my muscles, right?

A: Wrong! Actually, the opposite may be more accurate. There's a lot of confusion as to what the term "muscle tone" actually means. Muscle tone is actually residual tension in a muscle because it has been worked hard and heavy in the past and it is ready for action at any moment. Using light weights for lots of reps does practically nothing for muscle tone. To increase your muscle tone, you must work the muscles under heavy resistance. Also, using heavy weights for low reps doesn't necessarily increase muscle size unless the volume of work is high.

For example, if you want a given exercise to increase muscle tone and strength without adding too much bulk, you would lift heavy on a given exercise for low reps and low sets such as 2 sets of 4 reps, but on a more frequent basis (3-4 times per week). If, on the other hand, you were more interested in muscle size, you would want to focus on a higher volume of work with moderate to heavy weights, such as 6 sets of 6 reps, 10 sets of 5 reps, or even 4 sets of 12 reps on a less frequent basis of 1-2 times per week. These are just a couple of examples. There are endless ways to devise workouts for different goals. One of my colleagues actually just recently put together an entire network of websites with thousands of professionally designed workouts for every goal imaginable. Check it out at: http://ThousandsOfWorkouts.com

Q: In order to really lose body fat, don't I have to do 1-2 hours of cardio each day?

A: An emphatic NO! First of all, as a general rule, you should try to keep all of your workouts less than one hour, since excessive catabolism (muscle breakdown) may occur with training sessions exceeding 60 minutes. This will ultimately reduce your metabolic rate if muscle loss occurs. Second of all, you will get much leaner and more ripped by focusing most of your training time on anaerobic training (weight training and sprints) instead of traditional cardio (aerobic) training. Let me point out that this doesn't mean you aren't training your heart because you are avoiding traditional steady pace cardio. On the contrary, by focusing on high intensity weight training, interval cardio training, and sprinting activities, you are actually training your heart much better than traditional steady pace cardio since you are training it through much greater and variable heart rate ranges.

Q: I've reduced my body fat to levels that I can now see my abs, but they don't seem to be symmetrical. Is there any way to develop them to make them line up better?

A: No. The symmetry of your muscles is determined by your genetics. Some people's abs will line up perfectly, while others will be offset.

Q: Isn't the trick for eating healthier carbs just to stick to complex carbs instead of simple sugars?

A: Not necessarily. Some complex carbs that have been processed and the natural fiber removed from the grain are digested so quickly that they spike your blood sugar and increase your insulin levels greater than even table sugar. Some examples of these are white rice, white bread, waffles, and low fiber breakfast cereals like rice crispies and corn flakes. The only time that these would be ideal carb choices would be immediately following a workout to create an insulin response and quickly replenish muscle glycogen. I know there is a lot of confusion about carbs these days, so here are some basic rules to live by in order to choose the best types of carbs:

- Eat a variety of carbs; a mix of natural, healthy, simple and complex carbs will provide steady energy and blood sugar levels;
- When it comes to complex carbs, choose carb sources that are higher in fiber and haven't been overly processed (which strips away the fiber);
- When it comes to simple carbs (sugars), avoid high fructose corn syrup and choose natural un-processed simple carb sources from fruits, raw honey, pure organic maple syrup, and molasses (but don't overdo it…use those last three sparingly for just light sweetening)
- Try to combine your carbohydrate sources with lean protein at every meal

Q: Isn't it true that many people just don't have the right genetics to get lean?

A: No! That is the biggest myth I've found that overweight individuals have to overcome. Many who are overweight have given up on the idea of losing body fat and think that their genetics has destined them to have excessive body fat for life. It is each person's lifestyle, NOT THEIR GENETICS, that plays the biggest role in how lean or fat they are. Regardless of genetics, if you are a human being, then you have the ability to be lean.

For example, realize that 2 out of every 3 American adults are overweight or obese (currently), yet our population is made up of a very diverse mix of ethnic backgrounds (i.e. different genetics). America is literally one of the fattest countries in the world (along with Australia). This is due to nothing other than the lifestyle in America (sedentary and full of processed and fast food), and has nothing to do with genetics.

The one area where family history does in fact lead to obesity is through **learned behaviors**. For example, overweight parents are overweight because they are not eating and exercising properly and have a poor mindset about fitness. Obesity is passed along to their children only because the children learn and adopt their poor behaviors.

Q: Isn't it true that the models on the magazine covers have great bodies just because of their genetics? I'll certainly never be able to be that lean, right?

A: Wrong! I'll agree that the body shape and symmetry that the cover models possess on fitness magazines are partly due to their genetics. However, if you got a sneak peak at the healthy lifestyles that these individuals typically live, you would understand why they are as lean and ripped as they are. Their lifestyles revolve around exercising and eating healthy. If you make your lifestyle involve consistent exercise and a healthy diet, there is no reason you can't be just as lean and ripped as the cover models. The only thing that may differ is that you may not have the symmetry and proportions that they do.

Q: Isn't it true that I can "turn fat into muscle" by following the right kind of training program?

A: No. This is another one of those common misconceptions I hear people speak about all the time. Losing body fat and building muscle are separate processes in the body. There is no such thing as "turning fat into muscle". You can, however, build muscle and lose fat over a given time period, although most people cannot do both at the same time. The best practice is to try to keep these processes separate and either maintain muscle while you lose fat, or gain muscle while trying to minimize fat gain.

Q: What's your take on those electrical stimulation ab belts that have been selling big over the last few years? Do they work or not?

A: They are pretty much worthless junk, just like every other ab machine you've ever seen on an infomercial. If you see it on an infomercial, the likelihood is high that the product is worthless (not all…but most). Electro-stimulation does absolutely nothing to burn fat. There is some evidence to suggest that electrical stimulation may be able to increase muscular development in an untrained individual. However, those ab belts don't provide a strong enough current to even have any kind of effect. Also, an individual who has several years of training experience would not experience muscular development from a stimulus as weak as a light electrical current.

13.0 FINAL THOUGHTS

Thanks for reading. I hope you enjoyed all of the information. Rest assured that this book has provided all of the information you need in order to develop rock hard abs and reduce your body fat in order to see them. All you need to do now is implement the information properly and your results are guaranteed.

Set yourself some specific goals with a specific time frame and write them down. For example, instead of vague goals such as "I want to lose weight", or "I want to get ripped", try more specific and realistic goals such as "I will lose 12 lbs in the next 8 weeks", or "I will lose 2-inches off of my waist measurement in the next 5-weeks". Then go ahead and take action! Don't put it off either with lame excuses. Take action on your goal starting right now!

Alright, it's all in your hands now. Good luck!

If I can be of further assistance in any way, please feel free to email me at mikegeary@truthaboutabs.com. In addition, once you've read through everything and begun to implement the training and dietary strategies in this manual and are getting great results (believe me, you will), please email me a testimonial regarding your satisfaction with this book and the progress you've made. I'm always very appreciative to hear about your success stories!

If you're not already a member of my FREE Lean-Body Fitness Secrets Ezine, you can subscribe at http://truthaboutabs.com/freenewsletter.html. Two to three times per month, you'll receive a new newsletter sharing all kinds of new tips and strategies for a lean, strong, and truly healthy body.

Here's to staying lean, strong, and healthy for life!