

# The best "INTENSITY" techniques

Written by

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This month we want to introduce different INTENSITY weight training techniques to you. Many athletes train all year around with the same weight and exercise routine. But the body only grows when it is forced to adapt to new and more demanding activities. If your training session is a steady routine, it will not promote muscle growth since the body becomes adapted to the exercises you have been repeating all year around. Your body will reach a **PLATEAU UNLESS YOU VARY YOUR WEIGHT TRAINING ROUTINE**. For your muscles to grow, they have to be challenged with heavier weights and a change of routine from time to time. The following techniques will increase the intensity of your workout.



## Stick to the basic exercises

Sooner or later your body will reach the point at which it will not progress. The normal exercises and repetitions of your workout will not be stimulating your muscles to grow. This is when you have to get out of the routine and **RAISE THE INTENSITY** of your training session. Demanding your muscles to lift heavier weights and varying your exercises will promote future muscle growth



Do not train with extremely heavy weights This will make your technique falter...

...and, instead of relying on the strength of the muscle in the exercise, you will be depending on your entire body to lift the extreme weight.



## Forced repetitions

Some of us probably already use this technique with our training partner because it is very common. But once again, one should only use it from time to time to obtain full benefits. In a forced repetition, you train and force your muscle to the point where it will not be able to lift the weight itself. At this point your partner will assist you by giving you the minimal help for you to complete the last few repetitions of the set. Be wise and choose a weight where you will only need lifting assistance in the last repetitions of the set. This technique will stimulate muscle growth.



## Supersets

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This training technique also forces the muscles to work to their limit. In supersets we combine 2 or 3 exercises and perform them back to back without a resting period between the sets. There are two alternatives. One is to choose back-to-back exercises of different muscle groups, e.g. one set of chest exercise, followed by a shoulder, and then a triceps. Or the more intense alternative would be to concentrate on one muscle group to perform the superset. e.g. A set of short bicep curls immediately followed by dumbbell curls to the point of muscle failure.

Advice: You should set up your exercises so that you can change from one to the other without wasting time.



## Dropsets

As the name suggests, this technique consists of dropping the weight of the exercise when your muscles can no longer lift the weights on their own. Choose an exercise that will enable you to drop the weight fast and easily, like the butterfly machine, for example. Start the exercise so that you can reach approximately 10 repetitions before muscle failure. At this point drop 20-50% of the weight and continue the exercise until, once again, the muscles fail. You can repeat the procedure up to 4 times. This technique will stimulate your muscles to their maximum capacity.



## Pre exhaust Training

This is another extremely intense weight training technique. It is based on the fact that in a basic exercise such as a bench press, several muscle groups are involved at the same time. When bench pressing, chest, triceps and shoulder muscles work together to perform the exercise. Often when performing these exercises, the larger target muscles will remain fresh and full of energy, but the smaller muscles will get exhausted making you stop the exercise. In such situations, the larger muscles will not be forced to perform to their limit because they could still do additional repetitions.

This is when we make use of isolation exercises which train exclusively the target muscle without involving other muscles. As in the bench press example, we could do some butterfly sets which exclusively activates the chest muscle. This way we are pre-exhausting the target muscle and when moving to the compound exercise, the assistant muscle groups will be full of energy which will allow us to work the chest muscle with increased intensity and to its highest capacity.

This technique is especially useful for back exercises where the grip is a limiting factor. While our back muscle would still be able to perform more repetitions, our hands can not hold the weight and therefore we have to stop.

This technique can also be combined with supersets, maximizing the intensity of a single muscle group. Plan out the relevant exercises and do them back to back with no rest in between.

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## Negative repetitions

This method is extremely stressful for the body. Negative repetitions are an excellent stimulant for muscle growth, but should not be used often because you run the risk of overtraining. This technique can only be done with a training partner. The main goal in this training exercise is to concentrate and control the negative phase of the lifting exercise using maximum weight.

Your partner helps you to put the weight in a starting position; you then control and lower the weight fighting against the extreme heavy weight. Your partner again helps you to lift the weight back to the starting position. You have to choose a weight higher than your maximum weight ...

...this being the weight with which you can do only 1 repetition. Do not overdo the weight because you run the risk of injury and also because you have to control the weight throughout the entire movement.

A case to start with: The intensity techniques described below test muscles to their limit; so much so that they should only be used at precise moments. Overused, they would stress your body and cause adverse effects such as muscle mass loss, more fat, energy loss, sleep disorders, loss of strength, poor appetite and discouragement.