

SUPERMEN



Building Maximum Muscle for a Lifetime

Craig Cecil

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Disclaimer: Steroids, HGH, Diuretics and any other Illegal Performance Enhancing Drugs

Illegal substances are endemic in our society. They have permeated all aspects of modern culture—sports, entertainment, and high school and middle school age children. They have no place in this book or the concepts presented herein.

The true measure of a person is not the muscle they carry or the physical strength they possess, but the character within. Be true to yourself and others.

Cover design: Jaclyn Urlahs

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Thanks!

This book is dedicated to all those who have gone on the journey with me, including mentors, friends, willing participants, unwitting suspects, innocent bystanders, and past and future champions.

Thanks to Mitch, Nathan, Mad Dog, Jason, Dave, Willie, Mark, Rob, Adam, and Kyle. Whether you realized it or not, you helped validate the system and concepts in this book.

I probably couldn't have done it without you—nah, yes I could 😊

Mitch, you deserve a medal for training with me for over two decades. I hope I've helped keep you young and you've helped keep me grounded (there's still hope!). No one could ask for a better friend—how I deserved you, only God knows.

Oh, and a very special thanks to Leslie, who put up with it all. Still.

Tell Me What You Think

I'm always interested in getting feedback on my books. Please send your comments and suggestions to:

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Introduction

This book presents a weightlifting system that maximizes the muscular development of an individual, while creating a complete, balanced and symmetrical physique. It is not a guide for maximizing strength, increasing your bench press, or cutting up for a physique contest. It's not a manual for how to perform basic weightlifting movements. It's a book that will save you years of trial-and-error in the gym and provide you with decades of weight training insights. It's a book for the rest of us—those with average genetics, strong minds and stronger hearts. More significantly, it represents a long-term plan for lifting weights wisely throughout your life while building and maintaining significant muscle mass.

The application of consistent, logical effort, over a prolonged period is the key to reaching your physical muscular potential. For most individuals, that means training smart and training hard for at least three years. In that time, an ordinary individual can transform into a virtual superman among his peers.

This book will show you how to do it.

Origins

It all started in the summer of 1989.

I had just finished my undergraduate degree and was preparing to go off to graduate school. My NCAA Track & Field career had just ended. Before that, I had made the move from baseball (Little League through high school ball). I had always been active, always played sports. Now, I was at a crossroads.

What do I do now? I knew I wanted to pick something that I could do for the rest of my life. I ran through the usual suspects in my head—golf (too time consuming, frustrating, weather dependent), bowling (not active enough), billiards, darts, ping-pong (you're kidding, right?).

Then, I remembered my uncle. He came by to visit every so often and man, did he have some guns on him. In fact, he was heavily muscled, especially for a man who stood about five foot seven—and, he had managed to win a state bodybuilding contest while training at home. His son had accomplished similar feats and was still going strong in the competitive amateur bodybuilding world. I wondered if there might be some genetic potential...

During college, I was supposed to do some off-season conditioning in the weight room in preparation for track and field season. I don't think I even touched any free weights, just air-pressurized Keiser machines. (The college installed those machines exclaiming that they were greater than sliced bread—guess which was always broken, the machines or the cast iron free weights?) I trudged into the weight room about two or three times a week (more often two) for a few weeks before track season every year. Didn't see any difference—no big surprise there.

Four years later, I saw the same image staring back at me in the mirror that I saw as a freshman—5'11" and 165 lbs with some (very) minor muscle separation. Probably 14% body fat. It was time to do something about this. My initial goal was to try to put on about 20 lbs of muscle, taking me up to 185

lbs. At my height, I thought that would give me a nice, slightly muscular look. I might even turn the heads of some ladies. Isn't that why most of us guys lift weights anyway?

Now, you have to understand that when I decide to jump into something, it's all or nothing. There is no middle ground. With that in mind, in very short order I bought Arnold's *Encyclopedia of Modern Bodybuilding*, altered my diet to include a LOT more protein and calories, bought a simple weight set and bench, then joined a gym and started working out 5-6 days per week. Hard.

I mean really hard.

Every set to failure hard.

Very quickly, I noticed that I was making rapid progress. I also noted that I was doing two things that most others in the gym were not doing—I was feeding my body a truckload of protein and calories, and I was working out very, very hard *consistently*.

Fast forward ten years and the image in the mirror staring back was vastly different; in fact, the transformation was nothing short of amazing—5'11" and 260 lbs with 10% body fat. I had created a virtual superman. Except this one was real.



(Sorry about the quality of the photos above, but I wanted you to see un-retouched, raw photos. The before picture of me was taken a couple weeks before I started lifting weights—this is what I looked like through high school and college. The after picture was taken with an iPhone right before publication of this book. I used no performance enhancing drugs—ever. Oh, and I only worked biceps before the picture was taken—everything else is un-pumped.)

The system worked—for me. But did it work for others as well?

Over the past twenty years, I've been fortunate to have a small army of dedicated training partners follow my steps. One has been with me for the entire twenty-plus year saga, several others have been around for more than a decade, and the rest of the current cadre have endured a solid five-year tenure. Even more have come in and out of the training circle for periods of 3 months to a year. In all, about one hundred trained under my system for at least three solid months over the last twenty years.

Some came with years of weight training experience, others with a couple years, and still others were practically new to weights. Some were tall, others short, some naturally muscular, others lean, overweight, or skinny.

For those who followed my system for at least three months, one thing was always constant—they ended up at their leanest, most muscular body weight they ever achieved. Over those 20 years, I built an army of supermen.

So in the end, my system worked for all who followed it as prescribed, I got the girl (she's now my wife), and I learned a lot of valuable lessons which I've tried to capture in this book.

Now, let's start your transformation and get to the good stuff.

Guiding Principles

The system presented in this book has the same guiding principles as almost every other weightlifting system created. Except, we're going to add one more that most don't talk about—intelligence. You'll see how it makes a big difference. Along the way, we'll also ask for courage, honesty, and a little critical thinking. They all add up to success.

● **Consistency**

Showing up really is half the battle. The thing is, you've got to show up all the time, week after week, month after month, year after year. This is not a sprint—it's a marathon. It ends when you end. There's a reason that grueling long-term events are called 'Iron Man' events. In this case, you're going to build Iron Man. Remember, it's all about building momentum. There can be no periods of starting and stopping. You need to work out consistently. It's you versus you. The most important principle. End of discussion.

● **Progressive Resistance**

Now that you're showing up all the time, you need to continually do things that increase the stress on your muscles (if you don't, nothing is going to change). This is called progressive resistance—it's the bedrock of all weightlifting systems. In this book, you'll become a magician at combining the elements of weight, time and volume to produce exceptional results. Doing exceptional things will produce exceptional results. I'll give you plenty of exceptional workouts in the second half of this book that are guaranteed to increase the stress on your muscles.

● **Compound, Multi-Joint Movements with Full Range of Motion**

You show up all the time, you're a master of progressive resistance training, but you still aren't growing muscles like you want. Stop using the cable-crossover and start basing the core of every workout around compound, multi-joint movements. You know them. They're the ones that everyone likes to avoid: squats, front-squats, deadlifts, cleans, rows, and chins. Get past the bench press and there's a world of these exercises. I'll show you how to combine them effectively with isolation exercises to create that superhero physique you really want. It's simple. Don't include basic, compound movements as the core of every workout and don't get a supremely muscular physique. I'll talk more about this below.

Additionally, you need to use a full range of motion with all exercises in order to build a complete physique. Half-reps may build your ego but they also build half a physique. There is a limited time and place for partial reps, and I'll show you when, where and why to use them.

● **Intelligence**

Ok, here's where we go off the trail and delve into an area that almost all weightlifting systems ignore. Many people consistently train with compound exercises using progressive resistance—for a while. But then, several things typically start to happen. They get hurt—often more frequently as

they age. They forget things. Then the slow decline begins. It's all because they didn't know how to train intelligently for a lifetime. Often, it's an issue of ego versus intelligence, with ego routinely winning with the young at heart. That typically results in injuries or no progress. I'll show you how to train intelligently so you reduce the likelihood of injury and chronic issues. I'll show you how 'instinctive training' is really just training without a plan, like meandering through a desert for years (and maybe seeing a mirage or two), and how to absolutely know what you need to do to keep progressing. In addition, I'll show you how those assistance exercises are the final key in turning you into a mutant among men.

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