

The Book of Muscle - Reviews

Forum thread, Book of Muscle Review, t-mag.com, from 4 July 2004

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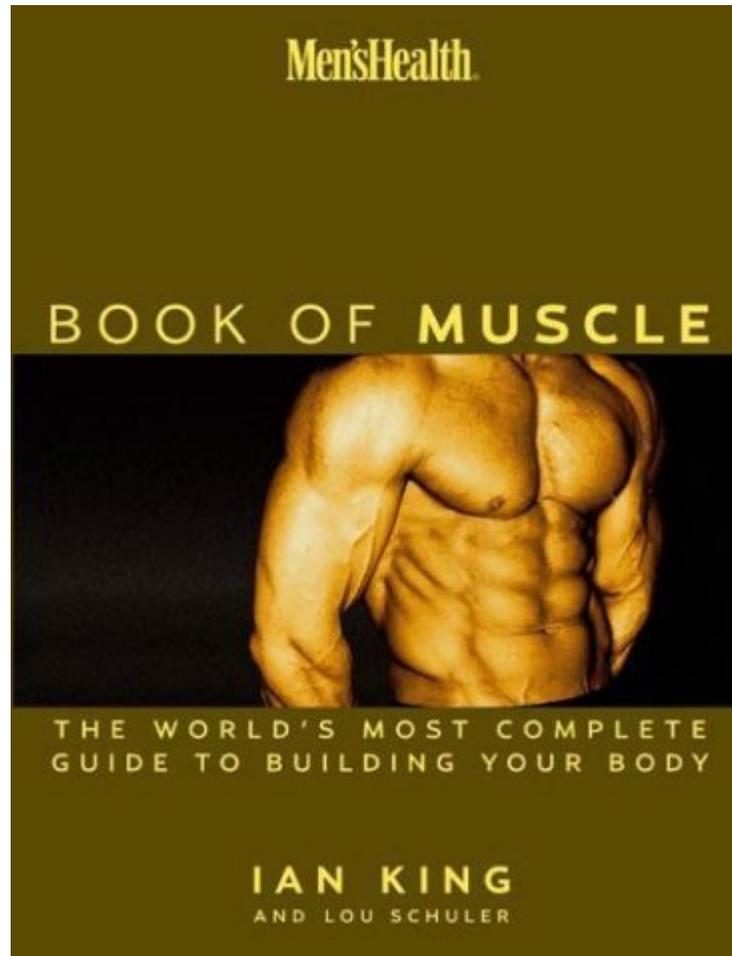
The Book of Muscle
Today's Activity
07-04-2004, 08:07 AM



T-Jack Admin
Moderator



Join date: May 2004
Location:
Posts: 118



The Book of Muscle, by Ian King and Lou Schuler, is a hardcover, 364 page book with 156 color photos and 16 full-color drawings. This book covers exercises to target every muscle group, plus contains basic info on anatomy, the nervous system, flexibility, hormones, and nutrition. The book ends with three Ian King workout programs: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

For more info, checkout LouSchuler.com.

The reviews are in! See below!

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07-16-2004, 06:32 PM

obiwanheifner

Level 5



Join date: Oct 2002

Location: Alabama,
USA

Posts: 52

Pro's:

1.) This is the book you wished someone had given you when you first picked up a weight. I would recommend giving this book to anyone you know who is starting to work out. If you were a true samaritan, I think you should keep extra copies in your gym bag and hand them out to the "Lost Ones" at the gym.

2.) It's really amazing how much information is contained in the book. It begin with a disscusion of muscle fiber type and function, the role of the nervous system, the impact of natural hormones (and how training affects them), diet (including a discusion of thermogenic value of food), the value of pre-and post-workout supplementation, detailed exercise descriptions, and heavy-metal workout routines from Ian King for beginners, intermediates, and advanced trainees.

3.) This book by Men's Health blows away the books published by more "hardcore" muscle mags (like Ironman and Muslemag). It reads more like a T-Mag lesson on diet, exercise, and physiology cleaned up, given a hair cut and slick suit, put on it's best behavior and given mass market publication (there's even a little attitude in places).

Con's:

1.) If you're a true T-nation citizen that reads every article, searches the archives for

information, and has stacks of printouts by author (King, CT, & CW) then it is very hard to justify spending \$35 on this book. Everything in this book can be found the T-Nation web site (for free).

Don't get me wrong I think this book is great, but I think most long-time readers here would find Ian King's "Get Buffed" series a better investment.

2.) This book is published by Men's Health and that guy that's always on the cover of Men's Health with his shirt off is on most of the pages of this book in either shorts, spandex, or a speedo.

How was the quality of the book itself: photo quality, paper quality, etc.?

Very professionally done with very high quality printing and binding.

What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?

That a magazine like Men's Health can publish a great book on training.

Would you recommend that T-Nation citizens pick up a copy?

Yes

Overall rating:

Comments:

I agonized somewhat over the recommendation and overall rating.

I think the book is great and probably the best single book available for the masses. For the new or casual reader to T-mag this book is a **STRONG** recommendation (even though you could dig all the information out of the archives). For the novice or non T-mag reader, it should be required reading.

For the seasoned member of T-nation, who has limped through October, November, and December, read much Heavy Metal, and endured many weeks of pain, it would make nice addition to your bookshelf if you had thirty-five dollars to spare (but it's probably not

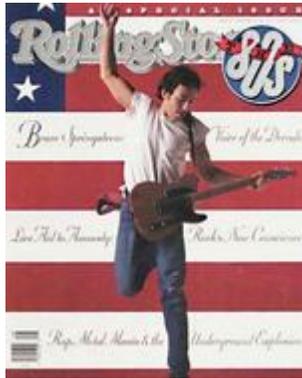
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07-16-2004, 06:32 PM

Boss14

Level 10



Pro's:

As with most Ian King books, this one was clearly written, had complete descriptions of all the exercises and had pictures to go along with each exercise. It's a perfect book for its target audience, it gives enough science so that the reader has a solid foundation about how the body works, but its brief enough to not bore or overwhelm the novice lifter.

Con's:

I would have liked to have seen an option for a fourth day for some of the programs, I've seen him write plenty of four day programs for T-mag so giving an option would have been a plus. The stretching section, while complete as far as static stretching goes could have at least included a dynamic warm up routine. I know Ian is not one to jump on the "stretching is bad" bandwagon, but it would have been nice to see a more advanced form of stretching since he includes advanced lifting methods.

Join date: Feb 2003

Location:

Posts: 336

How was the quality of the book itself: photo quality, paper quality, etc.?

The book itself was put together very nicely. Clear printing, photographs, a very high quality book.

What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?

Being a long time T-mag reader as well as a fan of Ian King's previous work/books I was already familiar with most of his style. However, I feel I always learn something (ex. program design technique) when I get to see how a seasoned professional writes programs.

Would you recommend that T-Nation citizens pick up a copy?

Yes

Overall rating:

Comments:

While reading this book the first thought that came to my mind was a phrase John Berardi used to describe his DVD, "Everything you need to know, nothing you don't". Much like that DVD, this book is geared toward the beginner/intermediate lifter and by that I'm not talking about training age in years but more from a knowledge stand point. If you've had your head in the sand for the last 20 years and are still following 3 hour workouts 6x/wk you will benefit greatly from this book. As with all of Ian King's books/articles it is well written, clear, easy to understand, and easy to apply to your workouts. It is the number one book I would recommend for the total beginner. Most of us who started lifting as teenagers wasted a few good years reading Flex magazine or listening to your buddy's older brother on how to workout. For any of you who have teenagers interested in working out this would be a great gift.

It's hard to find a coach's writing better suited to a novice than Ian King's. It will put them on the right track towards successful, healthy lifting.

The "science" section of this book lays down a good understanding of how the body and its muscles function without boring the reader to death. The nutrition section, while not revolutionary, will show the reader how to fuel their body to get results. The exercise section was very complete, with pictures detailing almost all of the exercises listed. It gave progressions, safety tips, as well as explaining the rationale behind each exercise's use. The body was broken down in classic King style (ex. Hip Dom, Vertical Push, Horizontal pull), which gives the reader an understanding of muscle balance.

The stretching section as I stated above was complete as far as static stretching goes, but I feel it could have used a dynamic warm up section since this is now scientifically proven to be the best way to stretch before lifting. I would have also like to have seen something on posture, since Ian has written so much on this in the past. Not everybody should be doing all the stretches listed, but I guess he was going for more of a broad based approach. The warm-up progression was sound and will give the reader a formula for doing this often overlooked part of the workout. The workouts themselves I thought

were done very well. I would have liked to have seen an option for a fourth day of lifting, but overall the programs seemed excellent. As with most Ian King programs there will be phases where you will have to leave your ego in your car since you will be doing a lot of pre-exhaust work before hitting a major exercise like the bench press. Some of the programs might be a little low in volume for some people's tastes or the exercise order might leave you scratching your head. However, you don't know if it will work for you until you try it so having an open mind and thinking outside the box will help. King will definitely show you that there are numerous ways to write programs.

Throughout the intermediate and advanced level workouts the reader is introduced to a pretty wide range of training methods, most of which will be brand new if you are not a reader of T-mag. You train like a bodybuilder in some phases, and a powerlifter for other phases. It's a great way to find out what type of lifting your body responds best to and shows the reader that it takes both types of lifting to create a complete body. The only part that I thought was lacking in the workouts was some pre-hab or "control" drills that King has written about in the past. Not once was there any mention of specific exercises to strengthen things like the external rotators of the rotator cuff.

This book doesn't hold much for the highly advanced powerlifter, olympic lifter, or highly conditioned strength/power sport athlete. It's not going to replace Supertraining, and most long time T-mag readers will be familiar with most of the book. However, if the reader hasn't read T-mag or is a total beginner this book will revolutionize the way they train since you'll never see most of this stuff in a Weider magazine. Plus the hardcover will give you something solid you can use to hit all the guys who curl in the squat!

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07-16-2004, 06:32 PM

RoadWarrior
Level 4

Pro's:

This is a really great book! I could not put it down once I received it. I have two other books (Testosterone Advantage and The Hard-Body Plan) and this is nothing like them. This is unbelievably well written and it explains each muscle and group and what they



Join date: Oct 2002
Location: California,
USA
Posts: 1505

do.

The exercise pictures/examples are excellent. It also touches on diet and nutrition. The workouts cover Beginning to Advanced.

Con's:

There really isn't anything I didn't like about the book. It is well written and well thought out.

How was the quality of the book itself: photo quality, paper quality, etc.?

Excellent. The book/paper/binding is top notch. This book looks at home on a coffee table as well as a workout bench.

What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?

The names and different muscles.

Would you recommend that T-Nation citizens pick up a copy?

Yes

Overall rating:

Comments:

This book is great for anyone who wants to know more about building muscle than just workout plans.

Thanks!!

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07-16-2004, 06:32 PM
Jessica Konowski
Level

Pro's:

The book provides a good introduction to many topics: exercise physiology, general nutrition, stretching and warming up, along with exercises detailing targeted muscles and

Join date: Jun 2003

Location:
Posts: 177

variations of the main movement.

There are three different six-month workouts provided--beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. These workouts are generally well designed, and incorporate some advanced lifting techniques such as: periodization, tempo, wave loading, drop sets, 1.5 reps, supersets and trisets.

The layout of the material makes easy reading, and helps the reader understand the introductory material being presented. The pictures are of natural bodybuilders (well built and lean, but definately not of pro-bodybuilder size or extreme leanness).

Con's:

Many ideas are offered such as exercise variations, nutritional information, and how to do specific workouts. The only problem is none of these ideas are explained. There are many whats, but no whys. For example, many of the exercises have four to five variations, with an explanation of how to perform the movement, just not why the alternate movement would be performed.

The workouts provided are canned, not taking into consideration specific goals. The book does not cover which exercises or lifting techniques to use to obtain various goals--strength,

I typically look for explanations and reasons why certain things are done or why they work. These are not found in this book.

How was the quality of the book itself: photo quality, paper quality, etc.?

Great quality: hardcover, good page thickness, very clear color photos.

What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?

Personally, I didn't learn anything new. The book is geared towards weight training newbies, or those with a very limited understanding of strength training.

Would you recommend that T-Nation citizens pick up a copy?

Yes

Overall rating:

Comments:

This book is meant to serve as an introduction and guide for basic bodybuilding. If I had to choose a target audience I would say the book is geared towards a typical Men's Health reading male (the book is also sponsored by Men's Health, whaddaya know?)

The book is good, just not what I would look for. I'm at a much higher level of bodybuilding/strength training education than the intended reader would be, so I found this book disappointing--something I hope didn't bias my review.

If you are very new to bodybuilding/strength training I would recommend this book. It offers many ideas and would provide the reader with a very wide, though very general, background from which to kickstart further education and research.

If you have been training for a year or more, or feel that you already have a general understanding of how the body works and adapts to resistance training I would not recommend buying this book.

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07-16-2004, 06:32 PM

zarro

Level 3



Pro's:

First of all, let me say this, THE BOOK IS AWESOME. When I pulled it out of the box, I realized how awesome this T-Jack thing is, this book is nice. The cover is slick. The book is well written. It really fits anybody who would read it, people who want more detailed science, and others who just want the meat of the info. It gives great descriptions of the exercises used in the programs. Lots of really great photos and descriptions. I tried one of the programs today, and it kicked my ass. So it contains programs for all levels. They sound easy but they are anything but. The nutrition

Join date: Jan 2004
Location: Illinois, USA
Posts: 173

information in this book is pretty consistent with what is said at T-Nation. Some small differences, more on that later. Overall the book is awesome, especially for the beginner/intermediate group. Also for people who really never tried an Ian King program.

Con's:

It's really hard to say that there is something wrong with the book, but there are a couple of things that I think would cause some stir. It really harps on genetics in the first section of the book, and as we all know, genetics play a role, but I could see a beginner reading this and giving up because he/she doesn't think they have the genetics to have a good body. I just can't believe that.

The nutrition covers calories and food choices, but they recommend peanuts, which I thought were not the greatest. Also they don't exactly point out a protein requirement, although 1 gram per pound is mentioned, the bulking recommendation doesn't seem to raise this by much. When they talk about load intensity, they really leave it open, and could lead some to believe that they could use an easy weight, and because they are using more for less reps, that they will make progress, I just have an issue with not working as hard as you can.

He advises you to stretch before your workout, I've never had a problem with it, but some might cry heresy.

How was the quality of the book itself: photo quality, paper quality, etc.?

Like I said before, this book is superb looking.

What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?

Really I'd have to say the function of the different muscles and how to perform some of the exercises.

Would you recommend that T-Nation citizens pick up a copy?

Yes

Overall rating:

Comments:

Really I think I've said it all. I'm putting myself on one of the programs, so I'll keep all of you updated on my progress, and how this book helped me in the long run. I really enjoy Ian's programs and I think his structure works great. I've done the Limping series, and the upper body equivalent and thought they worked great, so in the long run, I hold high expectations of this book.

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07-16-2004, 06:32 PM

HyperX
Level



Join date: Jan 1990
Location: Texas, USA
Posts: 25

Pro's:

1. The quality of the book is exceptional in most ways, from the illustrations of the various muscle groups to the paper stock that the book is printed on.
2. This book has loads of information that is easily understood.
3. All of the exercises have pictures demonstrating the lift along with step by step written instructions.
4. There are instructions for many variations of each lift, along with small pictures demonstrating the variation.
5. The workout programs are laid out in an easy to follow format, with recommendations of which program to start at depending on your training age.
6. 18 months worth of programs (if you are a beginner).

Con's:

1. The biggest con (maybe only) in my opinion is that every chapter is full of detailed information except the chapter on nutrition, which while it gives good solid advice, does

not have the detail of the rest of the book.

2. On a smaller note I think that the book being published by Men's Health, may be a con as the serious lifter may consider this a watered down version of King's lifting programs or "All show and no go", without looking at it.

How was the quality of the book itself: photo quality, paper quality, etc.?

The quality of the book is excellent. The content of the book is first rate, the photography and illustrations are excellent. The pages of the book are printed on high quality stock. My only problem was with the spine glue which on some pages caused them to stick together near the spine of the book and damage some of the photos.

What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?

For me the most interesting thing I learned was how each of the muscles work together to perform certain functions. King and Schuler do an excellent job of explaining each muscle group before going into the actual exercises for that group of muscles.

Would you recommend that T-Nation citizens pick up a copy?

Yes

Overall rating:

Comments:

This is an excellent book, a must have book for any beginner. I wish I had this book 19-20 years ago when I first picked up a dumbbell. I would have given this book a 5, but as some others have pointed out a lot of this information by King can be found throughout the T-nation archives, so the advanced lifter may find little new in this book.

That being said I would still encourage anyone, beginner, intermediate, or advanced, to purchase this book. It is a perfect guide for the novice lifter and a great reference guide for the experienced lifter.

The lifting programs are very solid, focusing on strength and function. I determined my training age to be an intermediate using King's training-age system, but I opted to start with the beginner program to strengthen any imbalances I may have before I move to the next program.. I was a little skeptical at first because the first few weeks of the beginner program are circuit training, but my skepticism quickly faded at about the halfway point of the circuit. I have been sore for two days. I am going to continue the beginner program and then progress to the intermediate program over the course of the next year.

I will post updates and let you know how this program really is long term.

Last but not least I would like to thank T-Nation for giving me this opportunity to review this book.

HyperX

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07-16-2004, 06:32 PM

Chief
Level 100



Join date: Jun 2004
Location:
Posts: 212

Pro's:

1. High quality
2. Hard bound
3. Very informative
4. Detailed
5. Covered all aspects. ie. Muscles structure, exercises, nutrition, stretching, etc.
6. Plenty of high quality pictures
7. Step-by-step exercise instructions

8. Full workout schedules

Con's:

I did not get time to finish the book so I can't honestly say there is nothing wrong with it but what I read and glanced through I didn't notice any cons.

How was the quality of the book itself: photo quality, paper quality, etc.?

Outstanding! Pictures were photo quality, paper was heavy, hard bound.

What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?

How muscle fibers and muscles actually work.

Would you recommend that T-Nation citizens pick up a copy?

Yes

Overall rating:

Comments:

I thought this was an outstanding book! I will say that I haven't read very many books of this type but none the less the book is excellent quality and well worth the price in my opinion. Obviously this book will help beginners but I think it will also benefit intermediate lifters and possibly even some self proclaimed experts could find something in here they didn't know or at least maybe some alternate methods, etc. I don't consider myself an expert at all. I also don't consider myself a beginner either and I will learn alot from this book.

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07-16-2004, 06:32 PM

momuscle

Level 1

Join date: Jul 2004

Pro's:

I consider myself an intermediate weight lifter and found the book to be very detailed but able to fully understand the diet and workout programs outlined.

Location: Texas, USA

Posts: 34

Intermediate workouts a,b and c fit together nicely. Both me and my partner agree the selection of exercises and routines are effective.
(Keep in mind we only had three days to try them out).

The beginner and advanced programs were laid out in the same manner and look to be as simple to understand and follow as the intermediate level.

The book goes into detail regarding how the different muscle groups fit and work together. I think it is important for one to understand why exercises do what they do so you know what to expect from your workouts.

Easy to follow and understand at any level.

I am not sure what the price of the book will be, but each workout program, beginner , intermediate and advanced is a 6 month routine. Even if you are at an advanced level I am sure it will be well worth the price!

Con's:

I might have skipped over it, but where is the cardio section?

How was the quality of the book itself: photo quality, paper quality, etc.?

Top notch! the best I have seen yet.

What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?

The section on muscle hypertrophy, fat and how the exercises are assembled for each workout level.

Would you recommend that T-Nation citizens pick up a copy?

Yes

Overall rating:

Comments:

I have read a good number of workout books and this one is at the top of my list.

As I mentioned previously, the book goes into great detail in all areas it covers, but it lays it out in "plain english."

I left the book out on my coffee table and everyone that checked it out really like it.

Most all my friends are trainers or fitness enthusiast so I think that speaks for itself!

Keep up the great work and I look forward to the next 6 months of my new training program.

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07-16-2004, 09:22 PM

mwebbjones

Level

Join date: Apr 2004

Location:

Posts: 15

I've had this book for a few months and I think it's fantastic for the beginner to intermediate lifter. I had been lifting for a little over a year when I bought it. I am about a third of the way through the intermediate lifting program and have made good gains. The only real complaint I have is that it is light on nutritional information, but then again, that could easily fill up a whole other book.

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07-16-2004, 09:46 PM

SliceKingB

Level

I think that the best way to review this book would be to get a couple of t-Mag readers to do a "Beast Evolves" type of review of it. A few readers would follow the programs in it to a T, from the beginning program and chart all progress with stats and photos. Then, at the end of the advanced program, a true assessment could be made. Any takers? T-Nation admin's willing to set-up a separate thread for this real world BOM experiment?



Join date: May 2003
Location:
Massachusetts, USA
Posts: 6

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07-16-2004, 11:18 PM

jp6v
Level 1

Join date: Jun 2004
Location:
Posts: 2

I own this book and figured I'd throw in my "unofficial" review. I'm a beginner, working out was my New Year's Resolution. I've gone through a number of beginner books during that time and have been lurking on T-Nation for a month or two. While I think The Book of Muscle is the best beginner book I've personally seen that doesn't mean I don't have some serious problems with it.

A reviewer above mentioned all the talk about genetics being discouraging. I can't speak for others but for myself that wasn't an issue. I just thought they were trying to paint a realistic picture...most people aren't going to end up looking like Arnold no matter their diet or dedication.

I have two main complaints. The lesser complaint is that the descriptions of the exercises sometimes leave something to be desired. King prescribes upright rows and after doing them for a few weeks, my shoulder felt wonky. Doing some searching on google, and here on T-Nation, I discover that basically everyone on the planet recommends NOT doing upright rows in the way described in the book because of the risk of shoulder problems. Basically, the model has his elbow up past his ears. For other "questionable" exercises (e.g. behind the neck pull downs) the book says, "This is a controversial exercise. If you experience discomfort or pain don't do it. Try this other exercise instead." There was nothing like that for the upright rows which I felt was a bit disappointing from a book that says it is "The Most Authoritative".

Okay, that's not really the end of the world. It wasn't that hard to find other advice, suggestions, etc. on the web.

My biggest complaint is that the beginner program, as given, is completely nonsensical. Unless I've misunderstood it everytime I've looked at it, they are asking for a BIG time commitment and a LOT of sets, which flies in the face of what they say earlier in the book (that their programs have fewer sets and reps than other programs).

In week 6 of the beginner program they give 12 exercises and you're suppose to do 4-9 sets for each exercise, 12-15 reps, 60 seconds of rest between sets, three times a week. On page 230 they say this should take you 40-50 minutes. Which is a complete joke. With the minimum number of sets and the minimum rest time you've already got ~40 minutes of just rest. Then you still have to do all of the sets! Doing somewhere between 48 and 108 sets is going to take a lot longer than 40 minutes.

Somewhere around week 12 or so they finally cut back on the sets so that you can finish the workout in less than 2 hours. But how many people will have abandoned the program long before then because it's asking for 2 hour workouts, three times a week, from beginners?

The routine is good, I just don't do nearly as many sets as they ask for. Even doing the minimum number of sets they ask for, three times a week, puts me pretty close to overtraining.

It just doesn't make any sense to me for a beginner. It really feels like they didn't bother to proofcheck their programs at all. There are also a few other minor oversights in the beginner programs. They specify "push up holds" but it isn't until week 7 that they tell you how long to hold the pushups for. When you start Phase 2 they don't tell you how many times a week you're supposed to be doing it. Reading between the lines you can deduce that they want you to keep doing it 3 times a week. Again, not really a big deal. More a symptom of the bigger issue, IMHO, that the whole thing didn't seem to be looked at very well before it was published.

I have no idea if the intermediate or advanced programs have any problems, I'm about 10

weeks into the beginner program.

Overall a good book and I still recommend it. But I don't think you can just hand this to a beginner and let them go at it.

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07-16-2004, 11:32 PM

Dave2
Level 5

Paul, you said "The workouts provided are canned, not taking into consideration specific goals."



Can any book do that? I don't think so. And since this is a Men's Health publication, it's obviously not for hardcore powerlifters. It's for a guy who wants to look good. A book can't be specific to everyone's individual needs.

Anyway, good reviews by all. The book sounds like it covers more than I realized.

Join date: Oct 2003

Location:

Posts: 1070

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07-17-2004, 02:55 AM

Jessica Konowski
Level

Dave--while most every book provides canned workouts, this isn't necessarily bad considering the intended audience. I think it would have been better to say a workout is usually between so many sets with a certain number of reps using this type of training with these exercises to obtain this certain goal or a different goal.

Join date: Jun 2003

Location:

Posts: 177

Too many books offer canned workouts, and I think the book would have been a real stand-out from those other books had the author explained the above and given a sort of rough fill in the blanks outline workout construction at the very least. I think this would not only allow the reader to construct a workout for their specific goals, but also teach the

reader why doing a certain workout does what it does.

I put that down as a con because I thought the workout section could have, and should have (given the author and other information in the book), been more in depth and explanatory. I also said later in my review that I would recommend the book to those new to the workout scene.

I wanted to give the book a 3.5 stars, but definately not four. I rated it as I did primarily due to the fact that most all of the information given does not include a reason why (as i said in the review). Otherwise, I said the book is a great introductory resource and is well put together. However, there are many such similar resources available and thought that given the author the book could have been better.

Feel free to flame away for my review, but that's how I feel. That's why there are multiple people reviewing the book so there are multiple peoples' thoughts to consider. If anyone wants further explanation of my review feel free to ask.

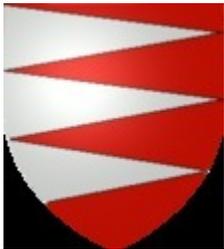
~Paul

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07-17-2004, 04:41 AM

MikeTheBear

Level 3



SliceekingB wrote:

I think that the best way to review this book would be to get a couple of t-Mag readers to do a "Beast Evolves" type of review of it. A few readers would follow the programs in it to a T, from the beginning program and chart all progress with stats and photos. Then, at the end of the advanced program, a true assessment could be made. Any takers? T-Nation admin's willing to set-up a seperate thread for this real world BOM experiment?

This is an excellent idea. My understanding, not having read this particular book, is that to go from the beginner to advanced workout would take over a year. I think we need to trim that down, say have the person only do a month's worth of the beginner program.

Join date: Mar 2003
Location: Colorado,
USA
Posts: 3975

Here's what I'd like to see done along with this (and this may complicate things, but I think it would be very instructive): have some type of comparison or control group. This control group would do a minimalist program using compound lifts. This control group could use something like Bill Starr's old Big Three program or the two-lift program that Pavel Tsastouline advocates in his "Power to the People" which uses only the deadlift and some type of press.

Hell, I like minimalist programs so I'd be interested in participating in the control group and do DLs and bench.

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07-17-2004, 06:54 AM
HyperX
Level



I just got done reading the criticisms some of you have for this book. The biggest criticism is that the programs are "Canned" and that the book does not explain how to tailor the programs for specific goals i.e. Just size or just strength.

I think that this criticism is not entirely justified. While I will admit that this program was written for the masses and lifting novices, King and Schuler state that the goal of this program is to make the muscle "bigger, stronger, and more powerful" along with being functional. That sounds like a specific goal to me.

Join date: Jan 1990
Location: Texas, USA
Posts: 25

I think that it is assumed (and we all know what happens when we assume) that during the 18 months of programs one would educate themselves on different lifting philosophies. Then after building a solid base decide if what which direction to go, bodybuilding or power lifting so on and so on. That being said, I think that this is still a great reference book for an advanced lifter. I agree that there probably is not much new in here for you, the advanced lifter, but if you are stuck in a training rut, there might be some exercise or rep/set scheme in here that may help you get out of that rut.

I think all of the criticisms are valid at first glance, but if you look a little deeper and see who the book is targeted at, the Men's Health crowd (which I did list as a con, because I

think people will dismiss the solid info in this book as fluff without actually reading it) and novices. Those criticisms become minimal.

Anyhow the feedback has been great, and it has made me crack open the book again. As I stated in my review I am going to try using these programs from beginner to advanced over the next year. I will be more than happy to share updates and answer questions. (If I can)

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07-17-2004, 07:03 AM

zarro
Level 3



I was the one who commented about the genetics. I personally accept that genetics is a huge factor in building one's body. What I said was I thought that it could be discouraging, especially for the beginning lifter. Those of us here I think realize how much genetics plays a role, but everyone reading this book isn't a t-man or a tit

Join date: Jan 2004
Location: Illinois, USA
Posts: 173

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07-17-2004, 09:55 AM

Jessica Konowski
Level

HyperX wrote:

I am going to try using these programs from beginner to advanced over the next year.

Join date: Jun 2003
Location:
Posts: 177

Are you planning on following everything exactly? I would be curious to know how you progress. How long have you been training? If you've been lifting for a while, starting at the beginner or perhaps even the intermediate program might not produce good results.

The beginner workout is mostly only twice a week, and incorporates minimal leg work in my opinion. The advanced program is only three days per week, which to me seems like too low of a frequency.

I know three days a week can work well for many people, but I think it would be better in a four day two days each lower/upper body. I believe this would provide a good progression from the intermediate program which uses three days a week, and would introduce the trainee to a more advanced type of workout program (Again, just my opinion).

~Paul

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07-17-2004, 11:21 PM

HyperX
Level



Paul-

I am going to try and follow the program as written. I may alter in a bit if I feel my recovery is sufficient(I was pretty sore after the first workout).As it stands right now I am going to do the program MWF(as prescribed) and some GPP and sprints on Tuesday and Thursday. I am also going to do the active recovery week every 7th week.

If I get the cajones, I may post a pic taken sometime this week then post one taken at every active recovery week.

Join date: Jan 1990
Location: Texas, USA
Posts: 25

As for how long I have been training. I have recently come off of a very long layoff from working out(about 5 years) and have only been back at it for about four months. I was doing a basic workout 3x a week upper/lower body split focusing on bench, dead, squats and rows and every once and a while some bicep/tricep work. I was lifting relatively heavy using 5x5 on all lifts.Prior to the layoff I had been lifting seriously(but not very smartly) for about 10-12 years.

I decided that even though I am at or near some of my prelayoff strengths that I would like to strengthen some of my weak points(shoulders mostly)so I am not expecting to many gains in strength or size in the beginner program. I just want to strengthen some areas

that may give me problems latter on if I don't take care of them now.

Some of my stats

5 foot 7 inches tall

217lbs (down from 240 lbs four months ago)

Most likely around 18-20%bf

17.5 inch neck

45.5 inch chest

39 inches around the waist at the belly button (yes, I am a fatty)

36 inches around the hips

24 inch thighs

17 inch calves

17 inch upper arms

I will keep you all updated.

HyperX

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07-18-2004, 04:24 AM

blam

Level

Good book, only problem was the lack of a 4 day routine imho. I tried doing something like this:

Join date: Sep 2003

Location: Ontario,

CAN

Posts: 225

Workout 1

Day Off

Workout 2

Day Off

Workout 3

Day Off

Repeat

But found I didnt really like it

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07-18-2004, 10:38 PM

Lou Schuler
Level 2

Thanks to everyone for your in-depth feedback on the book. I'm sure I can speak for both Ian and me when I say how much we appreciate these reviews.

JP, I wanted to address your comments specifically.

Join date: Oct 2002
Location:
Pennsylvania, USA
Posts: 71

I'm still trying to understand how you concluded that Ian was prescribing a two-hour beginner workout.

Basically, in weeks 3-6, you have three mini-circuits, 12 exercises total. If you do each mini-circuit three times (the maximum), that's 36 sets. And if you figure one minute to do each set, and one minute of rest between each set, that's 72 minutes.

I agree that's longer than the 40-50 minutes Ian recommends, and I agree we were sloppy there. (If you do each mini-circuit twice, you're within the range at 48 minutes.)

However, since we're talking about a low level of intensity, I'm not sure there's any real damage being inflicted. Sure, that's way too much volume for a more advanced lifter, but it's the beginner program. In theory, the guy should still be in a strictly neural stage of physiological development, and I'd think that the extra endurance he'd build, combined with the growth-hormone response, would do more good than harm. If nothing else, anybody who can get through those mini-circuits three times in a single workout would be a hell of a lot leaner after six weeks, with muscles poised for serious hypertrophy in the following stages of the program.

On the pushup holds, Ian and I kicked that around, and he wanted to keep the 311 tempo recommendation. You're just getting into the position and holding it for a second, then lowering and repeating.

I apologize for the confusion. I know we could've explained some things better than we did. We budgeted for a 320-page book, and had to cut quite a bit just to end up at 364. So I knew at the time we were truncating some explanatory material, and you can see how many photos we ended up cutting. (If memory serves, I think we shot every single variation of every single exercise, so the book would've gone well past 400 pages if we'd gone with everything we had.)

Thanks again for the feedback. If anyone has further questions about the book, you're welcome to contact me directly: lou@louschuler.com.

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07-19-2004, 09:17 PM

hoostus
Level

Lou Schuler wrote:

Basically, in weeks 3-6, you have three mini-circuits, 12 exercises total. If you do each mini-circuit three times (the maximum), that's 36 sets. And if you figure one minute to do each set, and one minute of rest between each set, that's 72 minutes.

Join date: Jul 2004

Location:

Posts: 1

I agree that's longer than the 40-50 minutes Ian recommends, and I agree we were sloppy there. (If you do each mini-circuit twice, you're within the range at 48 minutes.)

Lou, maybe I'm misunderstanding things but p.271 says to do 2-3 sets of each exercise on every one of those mini-circuits. That'll at least double the amount of time to more like a minimum of 90 minutes.

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07-19-2004, 11:39 PM

Lou Schuler
Level 2

You know, I had to go back and look at that twice to see why there's so much confusion, and now I see it's just sloppy writing on my part. That section talks about sets and mini-circuits as if they're different things.

Join date: Oct 2002 My mistake, and my apologies.
Location:
Pennsylvania, USA
Posts: 71

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07-20-2004, 06:45 PM
mwebbjones
Level

Mr. Schuler,

Join date: Apr 2004
Location:
Posts: 15

Since you're here, I have a question. In Stage 2 (weeks 11 - 13) of the Intermediate program, it calls for three work sets of 8, 6, and 4 reps. Are we supposed to increase the weight each set or does it just assume we will be fatigued and not able to lift the same weight the same number of times each set? Thanks.

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07-21-2004, 01:27 AM
Lou Schuler
Level 2

Increase weight--the old light-to-heavy progression. Then use a much lighter weight for the back-off set.

====

On the assistance exercise that follows the two strength exercises, you have a few options.

Join date: Oct 2002
Location:
Pennsylvania, USA
Posts: 71

You can do one or two sets. If it feels like you nailed the first set, you can leave it at that. Or you can do a second set with the same weight, a heavier one, or even a lighter one (if you think you started off too heavy).

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1 2 ■■■ ■■■