

PUBLISHED 09-20-02 10:00

http://www.t-nation.com/free_online_article/sports_body_training_performance/the_bulkbuilding_workout

King, I., 2002, The bulk-building workout, t-mag.com, 20 Sep 2002

**The Bulk-Building Workout
by Ian King**

Old School Mass Building

This article is written for those who want to bulk up. Now when I use the words "bulk up," I mean them in the old world sense — get big now, and who cares about a bit of extra body fat! So if you have plans to make it on the front cover of the next *Men's Health*, go away, and go away *now!* This article is about getting really big really fast, washboard abs be damned (for now).

Is this program right for you? The ideal profile I'm looking for here will be the person who's:

- Lean (maybe 6 to 10% body fat)
- Has an above average metabolic rate
- Focused on training
- In control of his life
- Male
- Has a burning desire to get big!

Sounds like a job description, huh? In a way it is because the following conditions would disqualify you from optimally using this information:

- High level body fat. If you're over 15% body fat, you may want to lean down before using this information.
- Over-focused on staying lean. You're doomed to fail in the bulking department unless you change your attitude.
- More concerned about what you look like with your clothes off than on. Forget it! "Bulk" means you look big in clothes also. "Cut" usually means you wouldn't know you used weights unless you stripped off! This program is for those who want to split out the shoulders of their T-shirts, not those who want to look like an underwear model.
- Slow metabolism. Because this program is aimed at slowing it down even further!

The Bulk-Building Workout

- Diverse focus. If you're the kind of person that changes the way you train because some young member of the opposite sex is cruising your area of the gym, you just got disqualified.
- If you're the sort of person who'd rather go drink beer than drink milk, forget about it.
- If your definition of "big" is less than 200 pounds, you don't need this information!
- If you're the kind of person who considers not offending someone more important than getting big, forget it!

What I'm going to share with you will shock some. It may be deemed politically or socially incorrect. It may offend the sensibilities of a few. This article isn't about being a contributing member of society. It's about getting big. There's a time and a place for everything, and this article is for those who are in a place in their lives where getting big is their major goal, not creating respect or friendship with peers and friends. I'm going to share with you highly successful yet socially unacceptable ideas. You aren't going to live like this forever, but there should be a time in every lifter's career when he can identify with what I'm saying.

Enough disclaimers. If you read any further it's your choice. Don't send me e-mails telling me you didn't think I was that kind of guy. When you want extreme results you need to take extreme action. I don't think members of our elite fighting forces take any different attitude when their lives are on the line in some foreign country fighting for our collective freedoms. This isn't about the recruiting videos; this is about the reality.

I want to take you beyond training in this article and share with you some lifestyle aspects critical for supporting rapid growth. So what's your life going to look like when applying my thoughts on bulking up? What are you going to be doing? Let's get into it!

Daily Schedule

Wake-up time: As late as you can. That's natural healing! Never use an alarm clock. If the sun is waking you up earlier than your recovery suggests is needed, take action to darken the room. Sunlight is a natural "awakener." But at this stage, depending upon your recovery condition and the duration of your night, your needs may be greater than the period of darkness!

Morning activity: Apart from eating, nothing.

Training session timing: At the time you find your body is awake the most — no earlier than late morning. If you have a day job, then train late afternoon, preferably when the gym is really quiet. It takes too much effort to walk around people and you don't want your cortisol levels raised because some destined-to-stay-a-geek kind of person is getting in your way. Having to grunt "hello" too many times can interfere with recovery.

Post-training shower: Now go and chill in that shower or bath until you feel recovered. Forget about the world water shortage.

The Bulk-Building Workout

Post-training activity: Preferably lie around the pool in the warm sun. If that's not possible, maybe because you live in a cold climate, go chill in a warm room.

Afternoon activities: Apart from a massage or a stroll along the beach or poolside, nothing.

Bedtime: Early. Preferably about 8:30pm. You should be smashed [**Editor's note:** "smashed" is, I take it, Australian for "wiped out," not inebriated] by then anyway.

Training Tips

Clothing: Never strip down too much in training. You don't want to see your muscles and think, "Gee, aren't I getting big?" Until you can see the muscle mass bulging out of your baggy training gear, keep training!

Between sets: Sit down, do nothing, go nowhere. If need be, take your own chair to the gym. You aren't getting up until it's time to do your next set!

Training partner: Get someone bigger than you, preferably a sadist.

Nutritional Schedule

Pre-training nutrition rule: Never train on an empty stomach except possibly for squat days. If you haven't eaten for longer than ninety minutes, you can't train. Go eat, then look to train.

During training nutrition: If you're doing squats or similar and/or if you just had a big meal shortly before training, sip a weak solution carbs/amino drink. If you're not doing squats and if you're feeling even the slightest bit hungry, sip a protein drink during training.

Post-training nutrition: You must consume this before the sweat dries on your body. Don't go to the shower until you've had your drink!

Meal frequency: Every two to two and a half hours. Get a watch with a countdown timer on it. As soon as you've finished your last bite or sip, get that timer going.

Meal content: Rule number one — Any food is more important than what type! You must have protein in every intake. You must pig out at least every second meal! Meat, eggs and milk — have them! What's the next meal? Have the same thing again.

Psychological Techniques

Key words: The most important word in your life will be "big." Apply your reticular activating system — be drawn to anything big. Big truck. Big plane. Big man!

Imagery: At all times have pictures in your mind of what you want to be size-wise. Use this imagery during those tougher times during the day — when you're forcing out a few extra

The Bulk-Building Workout

kilos (note, not reps!); and when you're forcing down that third helping of food (and this is just the mid-morning intake!).

Lifestyle

Stress: Avoid it. The most stressful thing you should be doing is exerting yourself in the gym. Mentally, the most stressful thing you should be doing is the calculation of what weight to use next. Emotionally, the most stressful thing you should be doing is controlling the desire to overtrain.

Transport: Never walk anywhere. The bedroom to the fridge will be your equivalent of a marathon. Why walk when you can drive? Never shop. That's what mum or some other important person in your life is for. If you're ever in a multi-story building, never walk up the stairs! And why take an escalator if you can go in the lift?

Sleep: Get lots of it. Forget the "seven or eight hours is enough" discussion. I want ten to eleven hours! And preferably a few of those hours before midnight. Always go to bed at the same time and wake up when your body wants to. Never let anything interfere with your sleep. If you need to take melatonin or high doses of magnesium, do so, but don't get reliant on it. Drugs and supplements are good. Addiction or dependence is not. Put blankets up over your curtains to blacken the room. Threaten to kneecap anyone who disturbs your sleep!

Social life: You won't have one. If you're hanging with girls who are high maintenance, find ones who aren't. You just want to expend enough energy to get what you need, nothing more. The activity of sex may not overly interfere with your training recovery, but staying up late, standing up and walking around in night clubs and bars is totally damaging. You'd be better off ordering delivery. You get the message? And ideally, be on the bottom....

Purchasing Decisions

Clothes: Think Texas. Everything you buy should be one size up because you're going to grow into it. It's going to be expensive as you go up through the sizes in a very short period of time, but hell, don't you love that type of expense!?

Eating implements: Buy big cups, big bowls, big plates. All eating implements you use should be big. It not only reinforces the big concept, it also makes your oversized servings look small, kind of the reverse of what most restaurants do! When you're forcing the super-serving down, you can look at the plate and think, "But it's only a small serving!"

Supplements: The container must say "Will make you bigger" or something like that on the label. If it says anything like "Speeds up your metabolism" or "Makes your leaner" drop it and run! Buy only the largest tubs. Anything small won't last long enough using your hyper-nutrition approach.

Training Program

The Bulk-Building Workout

There are many different training programs you can implement in bulking periods, but they should have a few common themes:

- Train no more than three to four times week.
- Use only a few exercises per workout.
- Use mainly compound (multi-joint) movements.
- Use predominantly free weights.
- Maintain strict technique and try to add weight from session to session.
- Use long rest periods.

Here's a sample workout, straight out of a 1960's *Ironman* mag — well, not really, but I'm sure similar programs once appeared there! If you object to reaching back in time, you didn't read the pre-qualifying comments closely enough in the opening paragraphs. Shut up and lift!

Day 1

A-1. Back Squat (Medium bar height on shoulder, medium stance, medium grip on bar)

Warm up: 1 x 20, 1 x 10

Work set: 2 x 20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: Superseded with pullover described below

Notes: Use the breathing squat technique*



*Breathing squat technique: There are a few ways to do this, but here's a basic description. Choose a weight you normally use for a ten rep set of squats. You'll now use that weight to get twenty reps with appropriate breathing during each rep:

Reps 1-10: One breath each rep

Reps 11-15: Two breaths each rep, second one taken during pause at top of rep

The Bulk-Building Workout

Reps 16-20 : Three breaths per rep, second and third one taken during pause at top of rep

A-2. Lying Bar Pullover (Bent arm, dumbbells also an option)

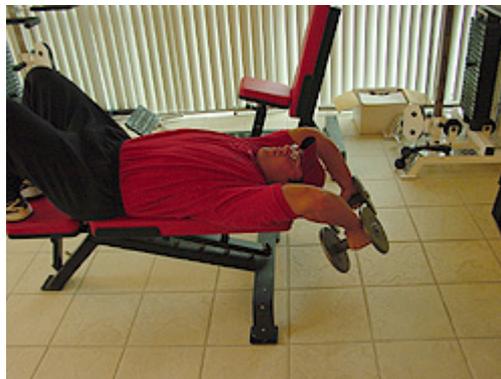
Warm up: 1 x 20, 1 x 10

Work set: 2 x 20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: 5-10 minutes (whatever it takes)

Notes: Use the breathing technique as in the squat



B. Dynamic Lunges

Warm up: 1 x 10

Work set: 1-2 x 20 (10 per leg)

Speed: 10X

Rest Period: 3-5 minutes (whatever it takes)

Notes: Step long, keep the lead knee pointing straight ahead

The Bulk-Building Workout



Note: A dynamic lunge means that you step forward with one leg, go down, then fire back up to the standing position with the feet side by side. You can alternate legs or do all reps on one leg first, then switch to the other.

C. Single Leg Squat (Hold vertical frame, other leg out in front)

Warm up: nil

Work set: 1 x max reps

Speed: 311

Notes: Keep range full and consistent



The Bulk-Building Workout

Workout 2

A-1. Bench Press (Medium grip on bar, feet down, bar to mid-chest, mild arch, use cambered bar if available)

Warm up: 1 x 10, 1 x 8

Work set: 2 x 5-6, 1 x 10-12, 1 x 15-20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: Take 3 minutes, then do a set of rows



A-2. Bent Over Row (Medium grip on bar, palms down)

Warm up: 1 x 10, 1 x 8

Work set: 2 x 5-6, 1 x 10-12, 1 x 15-20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: Take 3 minutes, then do a set of bench press



B. Dips (On parallel bars)

Warm up: 1 x 6 (bodyweight dip if using loaded dips in work sets; otherwise bench dips for warm-up)

Work set: 2 x 5-6, 1 x 6-8, 1 x 15-20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: 3 minutes

The Bulk-Building Workout

Notes: Hopefully, use additional load in at least the 2 x 5-6 work sets; maybe use the bench dips for the 15-20 rep set, depending on your strengths!



Workout 3

A. Deadlift (Medium grip on bar)

Warm up: 1 x 10, 1 x 10

Work set: 2 x 10, 1 x 20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: Strict 3 minutes

Notes: Use the breathing squat technique

The Bulk-Building Workout



B. Lower Back Combo

1. Good morning (rounded back)

2. Stiff legged deadlift (chest up/flat back)

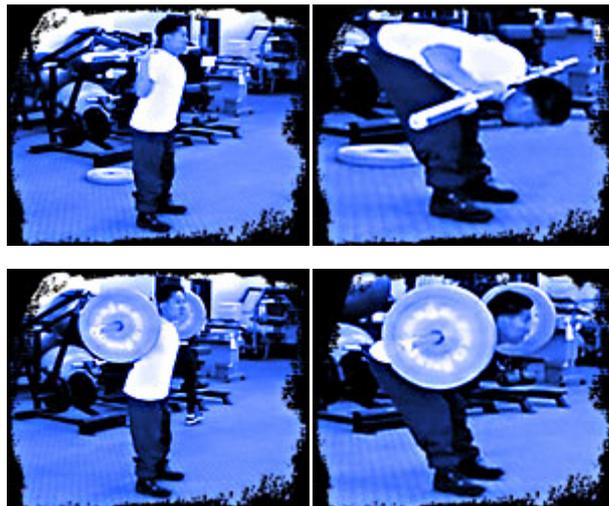
3. Stiff legged, Rounded Back Deadlift (same as number 2, but the back is rounded)

Warm up: 1 x 6 + 1 x 6 + 1 x 6

Work set: 1 x 6 + 1 x 6 + 1 x 6

Speed: 311

Rest Period: 10 seconds only between sets; 2-3 minutes between warm up and work set



C. King Deadlift (Single leg stiff legged deadlift, bodyweight only)

Warm up: nil

The Bulk-Building Workout

Work set: 1 x max reps

Speed: 311

Notes: This is a single-leg, bent-knee deadlift — one of my very own creations! Stand on one leg (starting with the weak side) and bend the other leg up until the lower leg is parallel to the ground. Place your hands on the hips or by your side. The aim is to bend the knee of the supporting leg until the knee of the non-supporting leg is brushing the ground. In reality, you may have to settle for a shorter range (you'll understand why as soon as you do this workout). If the aforementioned is the case — and I expect that it will be — look to increase the range from workout to workout.

You're allowed to flex (bend) forward at the waist as much as you want, and doing so will increase the gluteal involvement. Keep the working knee aligned neutrally throughout the movement. Only when your non-supported knee threatens to touch the ground on each and every rep will you need to consider adding external loading (by holding dumbbells in each hand).



Workout 4

A-1. Shoulder Press (Wide grip on bar, seated, behind neck)

Warm up: 1 x 10, 1 x 8

Work set: 2 x 5-6, 1 x 10-12, 1 x 15-20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: Take 3 minutes, then do a set of chin-ups

The Bulk-Building Workout



A-2. Chin Ups (Medium grip)

Warm up: 1 x 10, 1 x 8 (using lat pulldown)

Work set: 2 x 5-6, 1 x 10-12, 1 x 15-20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: Take 3 minutes, then do a set of bench press

Notes: Hopefully use external load in at least the 2 x 5-6 work sets; maybe use the lat pulldown bar for the 15-20 rep set.



B. Barbell Biceps Curls (Straight bar, standing, medium grip)

Warm up: 1 x 10

Work set: 1 x 6-8, 1 x 15-20

Speed: 311

Rest Period: 3 minutes

The Bulk-Building Workout



Conclusion

That's it. Pretty simple. But very focused and a bit anti-social. Whether you interpret everything I've said literally or figuratively, I'd expect you got the message. Think big!