

Light – Heavy - Light

by

Alan Palmieri

Over the years various methods have been developed and used to increase muscle size and strength. For the bodybuilder, strength is secondary to muscular size, shape and symmetry. In order to gain muscle size, strength needs to increase. I've penned several articles outlining some different ways for the bodybuilder to increase their strength, like adding a large washer to each end of a bar instead of a 2 pound or 5 pound plate. Small increases on a regular basis will bring about larger increase in strength... over time.

One approach I have not written about very often is a light – heavy – light method. It's not new and I'm not the originator but I have used it a lot during my training, especially when trying to increase my strength and use heavier weights in my workouts. It's relatively easy to follow and can be used with every movement on every body part.

Select only two movements per muscle group. Genetically gifted bodybuilders can use three but I wouldn't select more than that in any case, usually two works well. Some really hard gainers find two movements for all muscle groups except biceps, triceps, forearms, and calves even better. These smaller muscle groups for hard gainers seem to get over worked rather easily so one movement per - twice a week may be more beneficial. Set up a schedule that will allow you to work each muscle group two times a week. Be sure to allow two full days between each muscle group being worked. In other words, if you do your first workout for your Chest on Monday the second chest workout should be on Thursday.

As with all workouts, begin with a thorough warm up. For your first set use a weight you can perform about 10 reps with. On your second set use a weight you can only perform 6 reps with. The same is to be done for your third set. For you fourth and fifth sets, if needed, use the weight you used on your first set and perform as many reps as you can. When I say as many reps as you can, it usually means about 8 to 10 for me.

I found the first set provided a good initial pump and continued to warm up the muscle group being worked. The second and third set with heavy weight allowed me to really focus on using all out effort. The fourth and fifth sets performed with a lighter weight really pumped the muscles full of blood and make my skin feel like it is going to “pop.” Lifting extremely heavy for only 2 sets may not appear to be much but psychologically it allows you to mentally exert more force because you are thinking all you are going to do it for is 2 sets. It’s a mind game and we all know the importance of using the mind to ones advantage in bodybuilding.

When I say light I don’t mean a weight you could perform countless reps with and by the same token when I say heavy I am not referring to a weight you have to struggle to do only a couple of reps with. You must feel comfortable with both and make sure you are working the muscle and not overly using body swing or other excessive cheating motions.

With the simplicity of this approach come fantastic gains in strength and size. It’s well worth a try if you are looking for something a little different. There are any number of various routines you can use and I would not hesitate to try them all. For strength I’ve found this one to work really well. Each workout try to add just a slight increase of weight or one more rep to sets two and three.

In talking about the Light – Heavy – Light workout and the various other good routines available, I recently finished reading some material by good friend and one of my favorite bodybuilding authors, Greg Sushinsky. Greg is not only one of bodybuilding’s great writers and authors he is also one of the sports premier authorities. I find all of his material refreshing, interesting and valuable. If you have never read Greg’s material you are missing a great deal. I highly recommend checking out his site www.gregsushinsky.com Greg outlines various routines for almost every goal a person could have.

In mentioning Greg's site and material it reminds me of some of the questions I get from time to time about my favorite people, websites, authors, and items. Come to think of it, seems like questions related to those topics are presented a lot. Time permitting I may try to do an article responding to those questions. Now I'm not making any promises but I do have good intentions. Sometime back I started to do just that and included a reference directory listing names, mail – website – and email addresses in an article. I became sidetracked and lost it. Sounds like a good project for me startup again when things slow down a bit.

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