Necessity, it's said, is the mother of invention. I can't say for certain how the training concept known as supersetting first came into being, but I'd be willing to bet it originated as a way for multiple training partners - day, three or four people - to train together more efficiently and effectively. By switching back and forth between exercises - doing a set of one exercise, then a set of another, which is called supersetting, or a set of each of three exercise exercises, known as tri-setting - three or more people can get a better workout than if everyone had to stand around a single piece of equipment until everyone had completed all the sets for a given exercise. There is not as much dead time or long rests between sets.

Perhaps more importantly for our purposes here, however, supersetting is a way to make a training program much more interesting and varied. Whether you are training by yourself or with someone else, you don't always have to do five sets of one exercise, five sets of a second exercise, five sets of a third exercise in sequence. Instead you can break it up, as I have in this month's routine, by supersetting exercises. You do a set of exercise A and a set of exercise B, followed by another set of exercise A, etc. When you sit down to a meal of steak, a baked potato and corn, you don't eat the baked potato all by itself, the steak and so forth (pardon my example if you are a vegetarian). Likewise it's possible to combine exercises by supersetting or even tri-setting to make your diet in the gym more palatable.

At this time let me clarify a point about supersetting, because the term actually means different things to different people. For a lot of bodybuilders "supersetting" means doing a set of, say, a biceps exercise, such as barbell curls, followed immediately by a set of another biceps exercise, such as dumbbell curls. In other words, they think it means doing two exercises for one body part with absolutely no rest in between. The theory here is that if you do an exercise for a given muscle, then immediately follow up with another exercise that hits the muscle in a slightly different way, you activate more muscle fibers, work the muscle more fully and achieve greater hypertrophy.

It's a good theory on paper: unfortunately, it does not work. In fact, just the opposite happens. When you think about it, you realize that doing two or three sets of exercise for a muscle with no rest in between, even if the movements hit the muscle in different ways, is still just performing high reps. Whether you are doing 24 reps of barbell curls or 12 reps of barbell curls immediately followed by 12 reps of dumbbell curls, you are still totaling 24 reps. My experience is that a muscle does not grow thick and strong from such high-rep training. Instead it becomes more sinewy and hard, reminiscent of the body of an endurance athlete, rather than the thick, massive look bodybuilders desire.

So, yes, if you employ this type of supersetting in your training, you sure will knock the hell out of your biceps or whatever body part you are working. At the end of a month's time, though, I guarantee that your arm will be smaller, not bigger. In fact, that's one sure way to lose size, not gain it. There's also an increased risk of overtraining. Still, this concept of supersetting is relatively popular today in bodybuilding.

The supersetting concept you use this month is quite different: You do switch back and forth between two exercises, but in all cases the exercises work different body parts - for example, chest and deltoids or triceps and biceps - and you always take a rest after completing a set. In other words, you do a set of exercise 4A, take a brief rest, a set of exercise 4B, take another brief rest, then do another set of 4A, etc. I recommend your taking 30 seconds to a minute between exercises if you are training alone, and if you are training with a partner, rest however long it takes your partner to do a set.

Since the program also incorporates variable reps this month, you need to experiment to determine how much weight to use on each set to make the last rep or two challenging but not all-out. Some people like to use the original weight or even slightly lower, since your muscles will be fatigued by that point.

Notice that almost all the exercises you do this month are movements you have done before in this program. That's not an accident. I felt that in a routine where you superset for the first time several times, it's a good idea to only use movements you have seen or done before. You don't need the added challenge of getting familiar with a lot of exercises you have never done before.

If variety is the antitode to boredom - and it is - you certainly shouldn't be bored with this month's routine. Not only do you superset most of the exercises, but you do it by combining exercises for antagonistic muscles rather than a single body part, and you vary your reps. So at the point in the program where you have reached peak workload, you incorporate greater variety than ever before to make the training more interesting and stimulating.

Medical Warning and Disclaimer: Please get a physical before starting any of the programs at billpearl.com, especially if you are overweight, have not exercised for a while, have had any health problems or if there is any history of health problems. We also recommend that you then visit your doctor on a regular basis while training and report any problems to your doctor.

Still, any exercises in these routines be uncomfortable or dangerous to do because of some sort of physical impairment you have, please substitute another exercise for the same body part which will not aggravate the condition. There is a tremendous variety of exercises available for any body part, as you know if you have seen or read my book, Keys to the Inner Universe, so there's absolutely no reason to be doing some particular exercise that aggravates a back problem, a weak knee or whatever condition you may have simply because you see it in a workout routine somebody put together.

Bill Pearl Enterprises, Inc. and/or any associates are not prescribing any kind of treatments with these programs.

### Workout A

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<td>4B) Standing Palms-In Alternated Dumbbell Press - Deltoids</td>
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<td>5B) Bent-Over Head-Supported Dumbbell Rear Deltoid Raise - Rear Deltoids</td>
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<td>9) Seated Lower Pad Toe Raise on Leg Press Machine - Main Calf Muscles</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) Seated Buddy-System Neck Resistance - Front, Side and Rear Neck Muscles</td>
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1) Incline Bent-Knee Sit-Up - Midsection

- With the sit-up board set at a 25-to-30 degree angle, hook your feet under the strap.
- Lower your upper body until your towel back touches the board, then raise your upper body to the starting position.
2) Hip Roll - Obliques
- Lie on your back.
- Hold an object behind your head for support or place hands under buttocks, palms down.
- Bend knees, feel firmly on floor.
- Lower legs to right side until upper thigh touches floor.
- Return to starting position, then repeat to left side.
- Do all bending at waist.
- Do not let shoulders come off floor.
- Inhale to right, exhale to left.

3) Seated Flat-Bench Leg Tuck - Lower Abdominals
- Sit on flat bench.
- Place hands behind buttocks and hold sides of bench.
- Sit back slightly and raise feet about 6” off floor.
- Bend knees, bringing torso slightly forward until upper thighs and chest touch.
- Return to starting position.
- Keep tension on abdominals.
- Inhale up, exhale down.

4A) Medium-Grip Decline Barbell Bench Press - Lower Pectorals
- Lie on decline bench.
- Hold barbell about 6” wider than shoulder width.
- Lower bar to chest about 3” below nipples.
- Raise bar to arms’ length.
- Keep elbows out, chest high.
- Lower weight with complete control, making definite pause at chest.
- Keep head on bench, chest held high.
- Inhale down, exhale up.
- Can also be done with close grip.

4B) Standing Palms-In Alternated Dumbbell Press - Deltoids
- Clean two dumbbells for shoulder height.
- Lock the legs and hips solidly.
- Keep elbows in slightly and have the palms of your hands facing each others.
- Take a deep breath and press the right arm straight up over your right shoulder.
- As you commence to lower the right arm, begin to press the left arm to arm’s length above your left shoulder, letting the air out as the left arm is raised.
- Be sure to keep the palms of the hands facing each other during the entire exercise.

5A) Bent-Arm Dumbbell Pullover - Pectorals and Rib Cage
- Lie on bench, head over end, feet flat on floor.
- Keep your knees bent throughout the exercise.
- To make the exercise easier, lower the bench.
Hold dumbbell in each hand at sides of chest in line with nipples.
- Keep elbows in at all times.
- Lower weights just past ears in a semicircular motion towards floor.
- Lower dumbbells to floor or as low as possible without pain.
- Pull dumbbells to floor or as low as possible without pain.
- Pull dumbbells back to sides of chest using same path.
- Inhale down, exhale up.
- Breathe heavily, keep elbows in, hold chest high.

5B) Bent-Over Head-Supported Dumbbell Rear Deltoid Raise - Rear Deltoids
- Rest forehead on comfortable, not quite waist-high object.
- Hold dumbbells, arms straight down, elbows locked.
- Raise dumbbells out to shoulder height, even with ears.
- Hold position momentarily, contract rear deltoids.
- Do not swing dumbbells up.
- Keep body rigid, head on object.
- Do the work with rear deltoids, upper back muscles.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Can also be done without head support.

6A) Incline Lateral - Upper Pectorals
- Lie on incline bench.
- Hold dumbbells together at arms' length above shoulders, palms forward.
- Slowly lower dumbbells to chest until 10" from each side of chest.
- Elbows in line with ears.
- Forearms slightly out of vertical position.
- Return to starting position using same path.
- Inhale down, exhale up.

6B) Standing Barbell Press Behind Neck - Front and Rear Deltoids
- Place barbell on upper back.
- Stand, feet about 16" apart.
- Keep hands 4" to 6" wider than shoulders.
- Press bar overhead to arms' length.
- Lower back to shoulders.
- Pause at shoulders on each rep.
- Keep legs straight, hips flexed.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Can also be done seated.

7A) Medium-Grip Front Chin - Lats
- Use chinning bar about 6" higher off floor than you can reach with arms extended overhead.
- Hold bar with hands 18" to 20" apart.
- Pull up, trying to touch chin to bar.
- Return to starting position.
- Try to keep back slightly hyper extended.
- Do not swing back and forth.
- Inhale up, exhale down.

7B) Barbell Shoulder Shrug - Shoulders
- Hold barbell, palms down, with hands 16" apart.
• Keep feet about 16" apart.
• Stand erect, bar hanging at arms' length.
• Droop shoulders down as much as possible.
• Raise shoulders up and rotate in a circular motion from front to rear.
• Inhale at beginning, exhale at end of repetition.

8A) Bent-Over Wide-Grip Barbell Rowing - Upper Back and Lats

• Place barbell on floor in front of you.
• Keep feet 18" apart.
• Bend over and hold bar with hands about 6-8" wider then shoulders.
• Keep legs slightly bent, torso parallel to floor.
• Pull bar straight up to lower part of chest.
• Lower to starting position.
• Inhale up, exhale down.
• Do not let bar touch floor during exercise.
• Keep head up, back straight.
• Can also be done with close or wide grip.

8B) Straight-Arm Dumbbell Pullover - Pectorals and Rib Cage

• Lie on a flat bench with your head extending over the end and your feet flat on floor, straddling the bench.
• Hold a dumbbell at arm's length above your chest. Your hands should be flat against the inside plate of the dumbbell.
• Keep your elbows locked and lower the dumbbell in a semicircular motion behind your head as far as possible without causing pain.
• Return the dumbbell to the starting position.
• Breathe deeply, keeping your head down and your chest high.

9) Seated Lower Pad Toe Raise on Leg Press Machine - Main Calf Muscles

• Sit holding side of seat.
• Place balls of feet on lower pads.
• Press until legs are straight, knees locked.
• Keep legs straight at all times.
• Press feet forward as far as possible.
• Hold, the return feet back as far as possible.
• Inhale forward, exhale back.
• Toes out, heels in, works inner calves.
• Toes in, heels out, works outer calves.
• Can also use upper toe pads.

10) Seated Buddy-System Neck Resistance - Front, Side and Rear Neck Muscles

• Sit at end of flat bench.
• Cross arms or hold end of bench for support.
• Keep back straight, head up.
• Have training partner place towel over your head to keep head from slipping.
• Partner stands to rear, straddling bench, with hands on your forehead.
• Pull your head down as partner provides resistance.
• Partner then smoothly and evenly pulls head back to a comfortable position.
• Resist with neck muscles.
• Do prescribed number of reps.
• Do same up and down movement with partner's hands on back of neck.
• Partner now shifts to right side.
• Repeat up and down movements.
• Then shift to left side and repeat.
• Do not let partner push or pull head far enough to cause discomfort.

Workout B

Exercise
Sets Reps
1) Incline Bent-Knee Sit-Up - Midsection
   • With the sit-up board set at a 25-to-30 degree angle, hook your feet under the strap.
   • Lower your upper body until your towel back touches the board, then raise your upper body to the starting position.
   • Keep your knees bent throughout the exercise.
   • To make the exercise easier, lower the bench.

2) Hip Roll - Obliques
   • Lie on your back.
   • Hold an object behind your head for support or place hands under buttocks, palms down.
   • Bend knees, feet firmly on floor.
   • Lower legs to right side until upper thigh touches floor.
   • Return to starting position, then repeat to left side.
   • Do all bending at waist.
   • Do not let shoulders come off floor.
   • Inhale to right, exhale to left.

3) Seated Flat-Bench Leg Tuck - Lower Abdominals
   • Sit on flat bench.
   • Place hands behind buttocks and hold sides of bench.
   • Sit back slightly and raise feet about 6" off floor.
   • Bend knees, bringing torso slightly forward until upper thighs and chest touch.
   • Return to starting position.
   • Keep tension on abdominals.
   • Inhale up, exhale down.

4A) Standing Close-Grip Triceps Press-Down on Lat Machine - Outer Triceps
   • Stand erect, head up, feet 16" apart, in front of machine.
   • Hold bar with hands 8" apart, palms down.
   • Bring upper arms to sides and keep them there.
   • Start with forearms and biceps touching.
   • Press bar down in semicircular motion to arms' length.
   • Return to starting position.
   • Inhale down, exhale up.
   • Can also be done with medium or reverse grip.

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4B) Standing Close-Grip Barbell Curl - Outer Biceps
- Hold barbell with both hands, palms up, 12” apart.
- Stand erect, back straight, head up, feet 16” apart.
- Start with bar at arms’ length against upper thighs.
- Curl bar up in semicircular motion until forearms touch biceps.
- Keep upper arms close to sides.
- Lower to starting position using same path.
- Do not swing back and forth to help lift bar.
- Inhale up, exhale down.

5A) Standing Close-Grip EZ-Curl Bar Triceps Curl - Triceps
- Use closest hand grip spacing possible on EZ-Curl bar, palms down.
- Stand erect, head up, feet 16” apart.
- Raise bar overhead to arms’ length.
- Lower bar behind head in semicircular motion until forearms touch biceps.
- Keep upper arms close to head.
- Return to starting position.
- Inhale down, exhale up.
- Can also be done with medium grip, seated or standing.

5B) Standing Alternated Dumbbell Curl - Biceps
- Hold dumbbells.
- Stand erect, feet 16” apart.
- Keep back straight, head up, hips and legs locked.
- Start with dumbbells at arms’ length, palms in.
- Curl dumbbell in right hand with palm in until pat thigh, then palm up for remainder of curl to shoulder height.
- Keep palm up while lowering until past thigh, then turn palm in.
- Keep upper arm close to side.
- Do a repetition with right arm, then curl left arm.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Can also be done seated on flat bench or seated incline bench.

6A) Lying Supine Close-Grip Barbell Triceps Kick Back - Triceps
- Hold barbell with hands 8” apart, palms down.
- Lie on back with head close to end of bench.
- Position bar behind head.
- Keep upper arms close to head and parallel to floor, lower arms vertical to floor.
- Push bar up in semicircular motion until lower arms are parallel to floor.
- Hold bar at top momentarily.
- Lower slowly to starting position.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Can also be done with medium grip.

6B) Seated Concentrated Dumbbell Curl - Biceps
- Hold dumbbell in right hand, palm up.
Sit at end of bench, feet firmly on floor about 24" apart.
• Hold dumbbell in front of you at arm’s length.
• Bend slightly forward and place left hand on left knee.
• Rest upper right arm against inner right thigh about 4" above knee.
• Curl dumbbell up in semicircular motion to shoulder height.
• Keep upper arm against inner thigh at all times.
• Lower dumbbell to starting position using same path.
• Inhale up, exhale down.
• Reverse position and repeat movement with left arm.

7A) Heels-Elevated Medium-Stance Barbell Front Squat - Upper Thighs
• Place barbell on upper chest, resting on front delts and upper thorax.
• Place right hand on bar even with left deltid, left hand on bar even with right deltid.
• Keep upper arms slightly above parallel to keep bar from sliding.
• Head up, back straight, feet about 16" apart.
• Squat until upper thighs are parallel to floor.
• Head stays up, back straight, knees slightly out.
• Return to starting position.
• Inhale down, exhale up.
• Can also be done with close stance, 8-10" apart.

7B) Thigh Biceps Curl on Leg Extension Machine - Hamstrings
• Lie face down on machine.
• Place heels under top foot pad.
• Hold front of machine for support.
• Curl legs up until calves touch biceps.
• Return to starting position.
• Inhale up, exhale down.

8A) Medium-Stance Hack Machine Squat - Upper Thighs
• Back in machine.
• Place shoulders under pads.
• Plant feet on slanted platform about 14" apart.
• Stand erect, head up, back straight.
• Release safety stops.
• Squat until upper thighs are parallel to machine.
• Keep head up, back straight, knees pointing out.
• Return to starting position.
• Inhale down, exhale up.
• Can also be done with close or wide stance or to half-squat position.

8B) Thigh Biceps Curl on Leg Extension Machine - Hamstrings
• Lie face down on machine.
• Place heels under top foot pad.
• Hold front of machine for support.
• Curl legs up until calves touch biceps.
• Return to starting position.
• Inhale up, exhale down.

9) Standing Toe Raise on a Hack Machine - Main Calf Muscles
• Face machine.
Training Suggestions for Month 17

- For best results train six days a week, as follows:
  - Monday: Workout A
  - Tuesday: Workout B
  - Wednesday: Workout A
  - Thursday: Workout B
  - Friday: Workout A
  - Saturday: Workout B
  - Sunday: Rest
- Superset the exercises that are designated A and B for a specific number. For example, you do one set of 4A, rest briefly, one set of 4B, rest briefly and then do the second round of 4A and 4B, etc., until you complete the prescribed number of sets and reps.
- Although one definition of “superset” is to do back-to-back sets of two different exercises with no rest in between, that’s not the concept I recommend here. Rest 30 seconds to a minute between sets even if you’re supersetting two exercises. When training with a partner, rest as long as it takes your partner to complete his or her set.
- Whenever a set range is indicated, do four per exercise during the first two weeks of the month, then increase it to five for the last two weeks.
- On the midsection exercises, where a fairly wide rep range is indicated, start with the minimum number for the first week and gradually add repetitions until you reach the maximum number.
- **Do not train to failure.** The last rep of each set should feel difficult but should not be an all-out effort. It may be necessary - and is acceptable - to decrease the weight in the latter sets of an exercise to stay within this guideline.
- Increase the pounding on each exercise as your strength increase, always concentrate on correct form, and keep accurate records of you exercises, sets and reps from workout to workout so you can easily monitor your progress.
- Do 20 to 30 minutes of aerobic conditioning three days per week in addition to your weight-training program.
- Rest 30 to 60 seconds between sets even if you’re supersetting two exercises.
- Whenever a set range is indicated, do four sets per exercise the first two weeks of the month, then increase it to five sets for the last two weeks.
- For the midsection exercises start with the minimum and gradually add repetitions each week until you reach the maximum number.

Do Not Train to Failure

People ask me why I don’t believe in training to failure at a time when the popular notion in bodybuilding is that the only way to make maximum progress is to always go for that last impossible rep (in other words, train to failure). I tell them the answer is quite simple: If you do a workout of, say, nine exercises, three sets per exercise, and in each set you go to failure, which means you couldn’t complete the last rep, what you have done in these 27 sets is trained yourself to fail 27 times! That doesn’t sound like success in my book.

My approach to training has always been to push yourself in your workouts, but do not train to failure! The last rep should be difficult, but not impossible or unachievable. And I’ve always been a great believer that you should leave the gym each day feeling like you had a great workout but you’ve still got a little bit left in the gas tank, so to speak. Because if you don’t leave the gym with the feeling of having something in reserve, you will sooner or later reach a point where your training begins to seem so hellish and burdensome, you will either start missing workouts or stop training altogether. And then where is your progress?

So speaking from experience, I urge you: Train hard, yes, but not to failure. Complete what you start – and that means every rep. I believe that this approach will not only ensure that you’ll stay with your training program year after year (obviously training longevity is a very important aspect of all this) but you’ll also make the greatest progress. Why? Because you’ll be training yourself for success in each and every rep, set and workout. Your training will be a positive rather than negative experience. And you’ll be much more likely to keep your enthusiasm high and to avoid injury, overtraining and mental burnout.

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Editor’s Note: Bill Pearl, 84, is a five-time Mr. Universe and author of the best-selling bodybuilding books, *Keys to the Inner Universe*, *Getting Stronger*, and *Getting in Shape*. He has personally coached more major contest winners than anyone else in history. At his own peak as a bodybuilder when he last won the Universe in 1971 at age 41, he weighed 242 pounds at a height of 5’10” and his arms measured 21 inches!