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20 Months to a Champion Physique month 8 - intermediate

select a program Month 8 - Intermediate

As you go into the second month of the intermediate phase, there are certain things that you have to focus on and regulate more than in the past to make the kind of progress warranted by this level of training and commitment. After all, you are now training longer and harder than you were as a beginner, and you want to realize the maximum progress for your efforts - not only the kind of progress you deserve and are working so hard to achieve but the progress that will prepare you for the advanced training to come five months from now.

you will likely find that you have to really tighten up on your overall lifestyle to do this. For example, rest becomes much more important, so you should make sure you get at least 6 1/2 hours of sleep a night. If you have been a party animal accustomed to staying up all night, you are going to have to make some adjustments in order to get the most from your training.

You also have to monitor your eating habits more closely. Increase the complex carbohydrates in your diet and limit the fat intake. You should make sure you are getting 60 to 65 percent of your total calories from complex carbohydrates, about 15 to 20 percent from proteins and about 15 to 20 percent from fats. For muscle-building purposes your diet should include about a gram of protein for every two pounds of bodyweight per day.

I'll discuss nutrition in much greater detail in a separate article in a future issue. For the time being I recommend that you incorporate the above nutritional advice into your diet to maximize your muscle gains and start reducing any excess bodyfat you may be carrying.

Of course, as I discussed last month, by now you should be doing some aerobics on a regular basis to burn extra calories, boost your metabolism and improve your cardiovascular conditioning. By making all of the above part of your lifestyle, you will be able to get the kind of results that warrant spending this much time and attention on a weight-training program.

And speaking of results, let me go back to a topic I've emphasized before. Now that you have graduated from the beginner category and have entered this new level of training, don't forget to set new short term goals for yourself. As an intermediate bodybuilder you should decide where all this work is heading. Are you training to become more muscular and perhaps enter a physique contest? Or are you looking to become a very highly trained athlete and improve your athletic skills? Do you want to get in the best shape of your life by your next birthday or perhaps get in great shape for a class reunion? Your goals could pertain to body measurements) overall appearance and weight loss or weight gain - in fact, anything your heart desires.

Since no two people are alike and no two people look at themselves through the same set of eyes, it does no good for me or anyone else to set goals for you. Some goals should be set, however, and you should be working toward them. Choose goals you can reach and put time limits on them. Then promise yourself that you will reach the goal - and keep that promise! The short term goals should lead you toward long-term goals, of course - one of them being that in five months you are going to be in good enough condition to move smoothly into an advanced-training program. The truth of the matter is that if you have no goals, your training is going fairly well, your physique looks okay, and that's about all you are asking from yourself, then there's no great necessity for you to make a lot of change. Consequently, you won't make dramatic progress.

Goals are a way to motivate yourself to try a little harder; they give you a reason to get in better condition. If you haven't already been doing this, it's important that you start thinking along the following lines: Why you want to better yourself to this degree?

Midsection Perfection

Sooner or later most people who weight train seriously want to have a trim, defined midsection - in other words, washboard abdominals. While there's a school of thought that all you have to do to develop a great midsection is a crunching type of exercise, I disagree with that entirely.

For one thing, you can do crunches until your eyeballs pop, but once your body becomes accustomed to that particular exercise, it's not going to continue responding.

Second, while an exercise like the abdominal crunch is good for your midsection in general, I don't think the crunch by itself or in combination with other crunching-type movements can work all the muscle fibers of the midsection. For instance, there are muscle groups, such as the vastus internus, the intercostals and the lower back, that will never be affected by a crunching motion.

For this reason I have included a great variety of midsection exercises in these routines - to work your whole hip girdle and the entire midsection area. That's what all the elite bodybuilders who have outstanding midsections do in their training. By the time you complete the 20 months of this program, you, too, are going to have a midsection that's in fantastic condition because of the variety of exercises.

Of course, in order for you to see the results of all your midsection work, you will ultimately have to get your bodyfat level way down. That point applies to any part of the body, I know, but it's particularly true where the abdominals are concerned.

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.

Should 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.

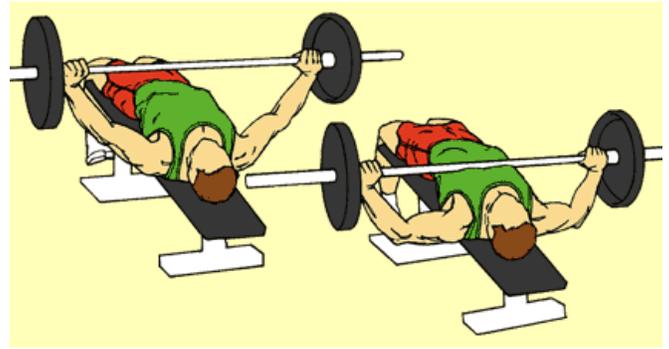
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Exercise	Sets	Reps
1) Wide-Grip Decline Barbell Bench Press - Outer and Lower Pectorals	3-4	8-10
2) Medium-Grip Push-Up on Floor - Pectorals and Triceps	3-4	15-25
3) Seated Palms-In Alternated Dumbbell Press - Front and Outer Deltoids	3-4	10
4) Standard Bent-Over One-Arm Long Bar Rowing - Upper Back and Lats	3-4	8-10
5) Barbell Shoulder Shrug - Shoulders	3-4	10-12
6) Seated Dumbbell Triceps Curl - Triceps	3-4	8-10
7) Standing One-Arm Curl on Low Pulley - Biceps	3-4	8-10
8) Feet-Elevated Dip Between Stools - Lower Pectorals and Triceps	3-4	10-20
9) Dumbbell Front Lunge - Thighs and Hamstrings	3-4	10-12
10) Thigh Biceps Curl on Leg Extension Machine - Hamstrings	3-4	10-12
11) Seated Lower Pad Toe Raise on Leg Press Machine - Main Calf Muscles	3-4	15-25
12) Incline Arms-Extended Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals	2	25-50
13) Stiff-Legged Dumbbell Dead Lift - Buttocks, Thighs, Lower Back	2	25-50
14) Seated Flat-Bench Leg Pull-in - Lower Abdominals	2	25-50

1) Wide-Grip Decline Barbell Bench Press - Outer and Lower Pectorals

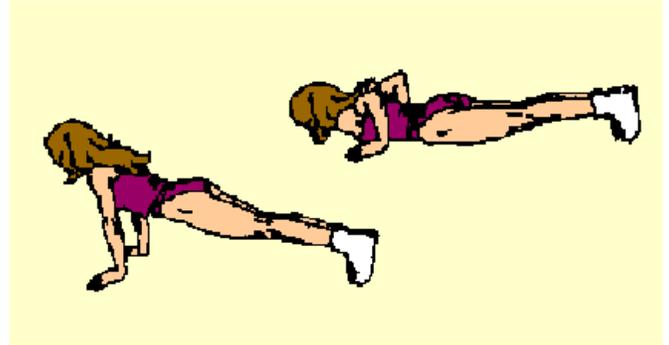
- Lie on decline bench.
- Use collar-to-collar grip.
- Lower barbell to chest about 3" below nipples.
- Raise bar to arms' length.
- Keep elbows out, chest high.
- Lower weight with complete control, making definite pause at chest.
- Keep head on bench, chest held high.

- Inhale down, exhale up.



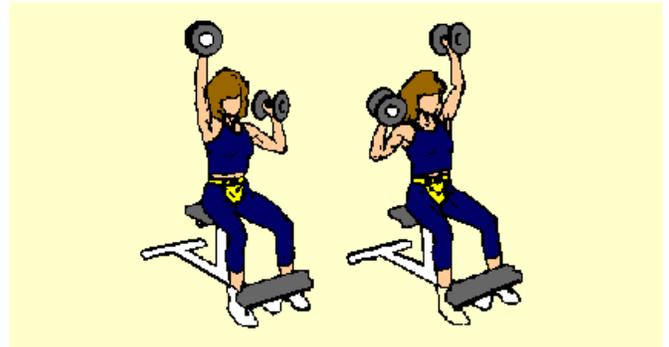
2) Medium-Grip Push-Up on Floor - Pectorals and Triceps

- Kneel on floor, hands 24" apart.
- Place legs straight behind, back straight, head up.
- Keeping body rigid, lower yourself until chest touches floor.
- Pause at bottom, then press to starting position.
- Inhale down, exhale up.
- Keep elbows in.



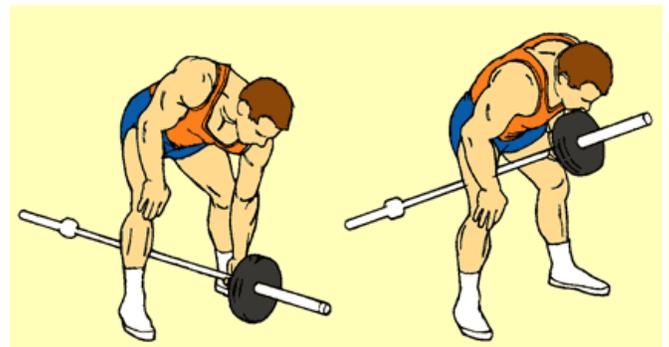
3) Seated Palms-In Alternated Dumbbell Press - Front and Outer Deltoids

- Raise dumbbells to shoulder height.
- Sit at end of bench, feet firmly on floor.
- Press one dumbbell straight up to arm's length, palm in, elbow in.
- Lower dumbbell to starting position and press other dumbbell up.
- Keep body rigid.
- Do all work with shoulders and arms.
- Do not lean from side to side.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Can also be done with palms facing out.
- Can also be done standing, with palms facing in or out.



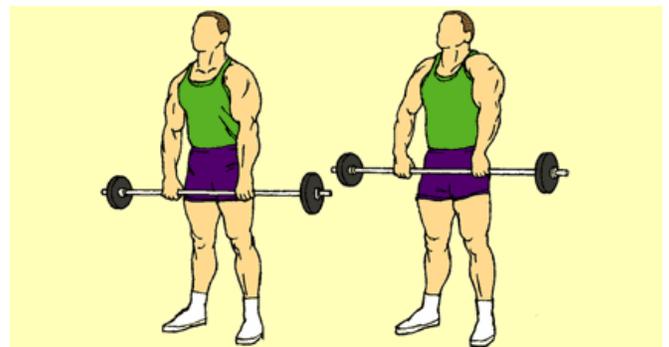
4) Standard Bent-Over One-Arm Long Bar Rowing - Upper Back and Lats

- Place empty barbell bar in a corner or against something.
- Put weights on other end of bar.
- Straddle bar and bend forward until torso is parallel to floor.
- Keep knees slightly bent.
- Grasp bar just behind plates with left hand.
- Place right hand on right knee.
- Pull bar straight up, elbow in, until plates touch chest.
- Lower bar to starting position.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Do not let plates touch floor during exercise.
- Keep back straight.
- Reverse position and repeat with right arm.



5) Barbell Shoulder Shrug - Shoulders

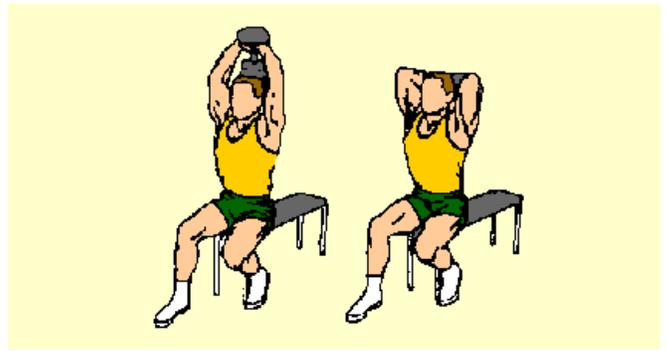
- Hold barbell, palms down, with hands 16" apart.
- Keep feet about 16" apart.
- Stand erect, bar hanging at arms' length.
- Droop shoulders down as much as possible.
- Raise shoulders up and rotate in a circular motion from front to rear.
- Inhale at beginning, exhale at end of repetition.



6) Seated Dumbbell Triceps Curl - Triceps

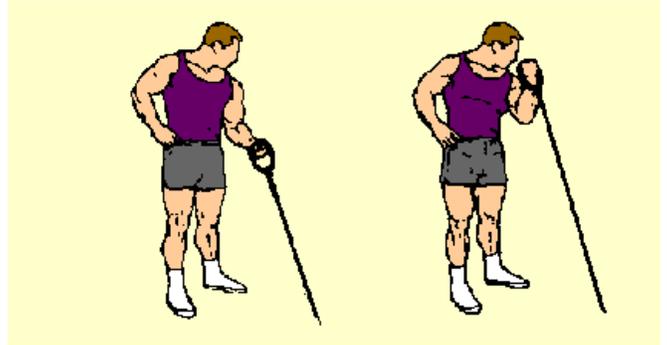
- Hold dumbbell with both hands and raise overhead to arms' length.

- Rotate hands while raising dumbbell so top plates of dumbbell rest in palms, thumbs around handle.
- Sit at end of bench, feet firmly on floor, back straight, head up.
- Keep upper arms close to head.
- Lower dumbbell in semicircular motion behind head until forearms touch biceps.
- Return to starting position.
- Inhale down, exhale up.



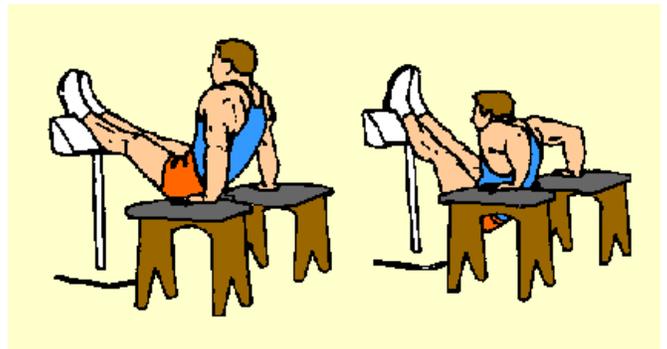
7) Standing One-Arm Curl on Low Pulley - Biceps

- Hold left pulley cable with left hand.
- Stand far enough from machine so weight stack is supported with arm at side, palm facing thigh.
- Curl handle, turning palm up when hand clears thigh.
- Curl until biceps and forearm touch.
- Keep upper arm in close to side.
- Return to starting position, turning palm in when nearing thigh.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Repeat with right arm.
- Can also be done with both arms together or alternating arms.



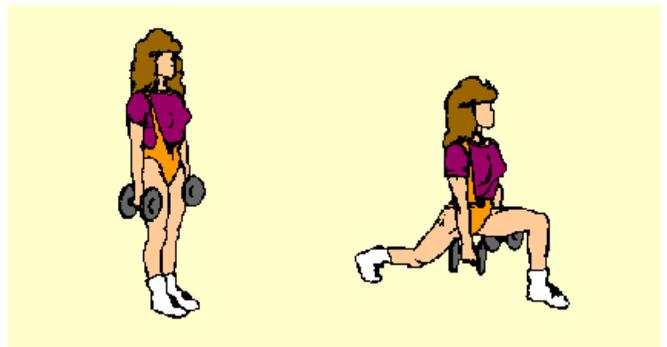
8) Feet-Elevated Dip Between Stools - Lower Pectorals and Triceps

- Place two stools, or chairs, about four feet in front of an object that is about waist high that you can rest your heels on.
- Position the stools slightly wider than shoulder width.
- Assume the starting position (left) as shown in the illustration.
- Inhale and lower yourself between the stools by unlocking your elbows until your upper arms are nearly parallel with the floor.
- Keep your legs straight and your head up.
- Return to the starting position and exhale.



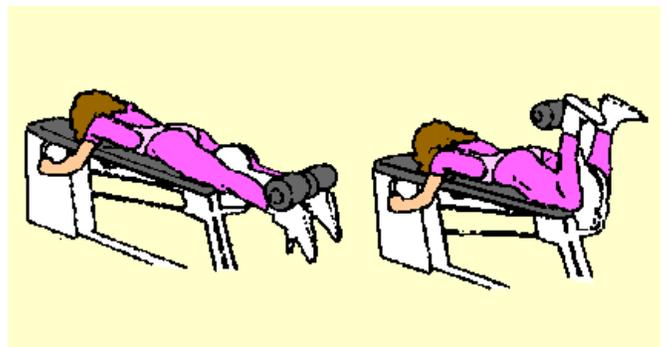
9) Dumbbell Front Lunge - Thighs and Hamstrings

- Hold dumbbells at arms' length, palms in.
- Head up, back straight, feet about 6" apart.
- Step forward as far as possible with left leg until upper left thigh is almost parallel to floor.
- Keep right leg as straight as possible.
- Step back to starting position.
- Inhale out, exhale back.
- Repeat with right leg.



10) Thigh Biceps Curl on Leg Extension Machine - Hamstrings

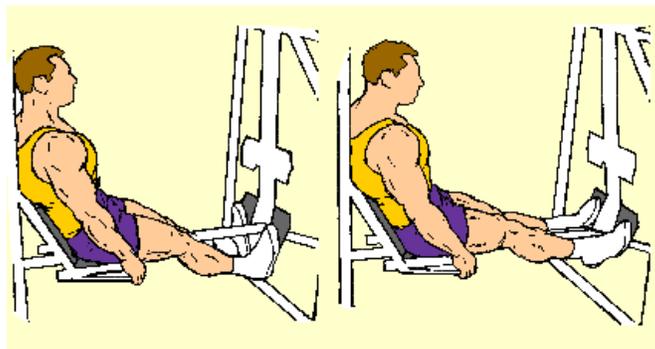
- Lie face down on machine.
- Place heels under top foot pad.
- Hold front of machine for support.
- Curl legs up until calves touch biceps.
- Return to starting position.
- Inhale up, exhale down.



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

- Sit holding side of seat.

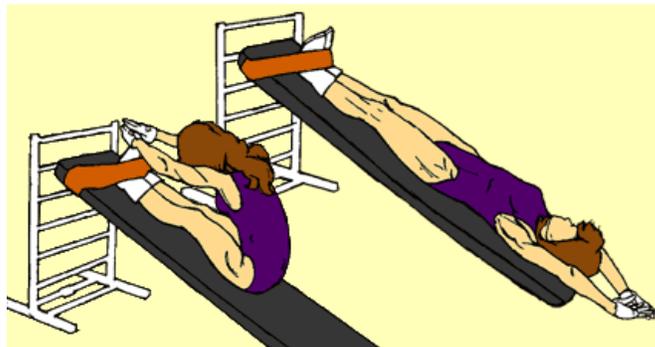
- Place balls of feet on lower pads.
- Press until legs are straight, knees locked.
- Keep legs straight at all times.
- Press feet forward as far as possible.
- Hold, then return feet back as far as possible.
- Inhale forward, exhale back.
- Toes out, heels in, works inner calves.
- Feet straight works main calf muscles.
- Toes in, heels out, works outer calves.
- Can also use upper toe pads.



12) Incline Arms-Extended Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals

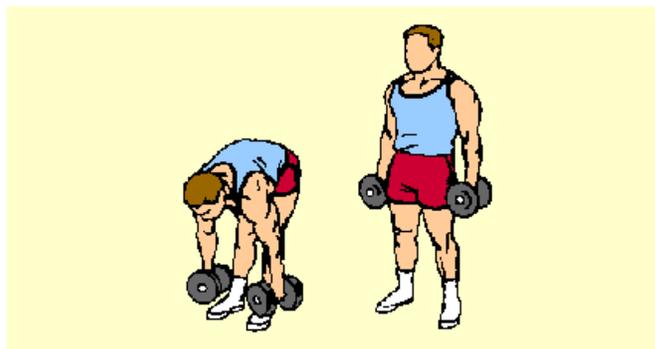
- Put sit-up board at 25 to 30 degree angle.
- Sit with feet at high side under strap.
- Keep knees slightly bent, arms above head, elbows locked.
- Lower torso until lower back touches.
- Raise straight up as far as possible.
- Inhale down, exhale up.
- To make easier, lower angle of bench

Note: Straight-Legged Sit-Ups put more pressure on the lower back than Bent-Knee Sit-Ups. Bent knees isolate and work the abdominal muscles to a greater degree. We include Straight-Legged Sit-Ups since it also works the hip flexors (iliopsoas and rectus femoris), but it should not be used if you have lower back problems.



13) Stiff-Legged Dumbbell Dead Lift - Buttocks, Thighs, Lower Back

- Stand with feet about 8" apart.
- Place dumbbell outside of each foot.
- Reach down and grasp dumbbells.
- Keep legs straight, back straight, head up.
- Straighten up, elbows locked.
- Lower dumbbells to floor with legs straight.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Can also be done with barbell.



14) Seated Flat-Bench Leg Pull-in - Lower Abdominals

- Sit on flat bench.
- Place hands behind buttocks and grasp sides of bench.
- Extend legs straight out.
- Bend knees, pulling upper thighs into midsection.
- Return to starting position.
- Keep lower legs parallel to floor when extended.
- Concentrate on abdominals.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- To make harder, hold light dumbbell between feet.



Training Suggestions for Month 8

- For best results do this routine three times a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday or Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Use the off days for rest and recuperation.
- Last month you worked up to five sets for most of the exercises. This month I suggest that on exercises 2 through 8 you drop back to three set initially and then follow this progression through the month:
 - Week 1: Three sets, minimum reps (except midsection exercises, on which you do two sets all month long).
 - Week 2: Four sets, minimum reps.
 - Weeks 3 and 4: Four sets, maximum reps.
- On all the exercises that have fairly large rep ranges - exercises 2, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14 - start with the minimum number of reps in the first week and gradually add reps as the weeks go by until you reach the maximum.
- Don't train to failure. The last rep of each set should feel difficult but should not be an all-out effort.
- Increase the poundage on each exercise as your strength increases in order to make the last rep of each set challenging. Make sure you keep accurate records of your exercises, sets and reps from workout to workout, month to month. This will enable you to easily keep track of your progress from one poundage to the next, rather than making the whole process haphazard.
- Concentrate on correct exercise form, and mentally focus on the bodypart being worked.
- Rest 30 seconds to two minutes between sets.

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 of 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!

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