

20 Months to a Champion Physique

Month 9 - Intermediate

select a program ▾

If you have been following this program, now into its ninth month, you are well aware of how much importance I place on variety in a training regimen. Each month I've attempted to give you routines that have as much variety as possible in what constitutes a solid, rounded, effective, total-body program.

I don't want you to get locked into a routine where you are doing the same exercises, sets and reps every time you go into the gym. You need variety - to both keep your enthusiasm high and prevent your muscles from adapting to a particular cycle of exercises, which can slow or stop progress altogether.

This month we do something new. In the past I've sometimes had you perform midsection exercises first, but more typically you have done them last. There have even been times when you have worked the midsection both at the beginning and end of the workout. This month you train your abdominals at intervals throughout the routine.

The workout includes two midsection exercises, the crunch and the alternated vertical leg raise. You do one set of each exercise at four different times during the session for a total of eight sets, the most abdominal work you have done thus far. Previously the highest number of sets for the midsection in any workout was six.

This month you train the various body parts in the following sequence: midsection, legs, midsection, chest and shoulders, midsection, back, midsection, arms. Of course, each time you work the midsection you do only one set per exercise. What this actually means, as you will find out quickly is about the only time you get a "rest" during the entire workout, since you do five sets per exercise on all the other movements. Even though you train your midsection four different times for a greater number of total sets than you have done before, it's the least difficult part of the workout.

Don't hesitate to reduce your poundages as you get to the latter sets of the exercises in order to stay within our guideline of making the last rep difficult but not impossible. Remember, the approach here is; don't train to failure. That's not to imply you won't be pushing yourself - five sets per exercise while training the entire body is hard work.

Speaking of training the entire body, we're now entering the final two months in which you do a whole-body routine. You will switch to a split routine in the 11th month; i.e., you will train half your body in one workout and the other half in the next workout.

Let me remind you to make sure you do some aerobic exercise on a regular basis, pay more attention to your nutrition and get sufficient sleep if you want maximum benefit from this level of training intensity. Now that you are well into the intermediate phase of this program you are training harder and spending more time in the gym than you were at the beginning, so these other factors become more important if you want to see the progress you deserve.

Lagging Bodypart

It's not uncommon to discover that certain bodyparts don't respond as well as others.; What do you do if you have a lagging bodypart?

Sometimes the reason for the problem is that you simple aren't devoting as much attention to the particular bodypart - or are ignoring it altogether - but that certainly won't be the case here, because this program has been carefully designed to work all the major muscle groups.

So what if a particular muscle still is not responding?; At this stage of your bodybuilding evolution, as you move up the ladder of intensity from beginner to intermediate (where you are now) to the advanced level, I wouldn't recommend that you spend extra time on a stubborn bodypart.; Not only has this program been designed to work all the bodyparts equally, but we've also been careful to incorporate a gradual building in training volume and intensity.; You run the risk of tipping the apple cart if you start adding more sets and / or exercises for a certain muscle group.; For one thing, increasing the workload may result in overtraining or injury.

My advice, therefore, is to stick to this program as closely as you can for its 20-month duration, get a solid training foundation and don't worry if some bodypart is perhaps lagging a little bit in development compared to the rest of your body.; When you have competed the 20 months, you can afford to spend more time on your back or your chest or whatever it may be.; By that time you will definitely know if you have a problem area or areas on your body.; With the foundation you build during this 20-month program, you will be in a better position to do more work for a problem area or give it priority in some other fashion - e.g., training it first in your exercise routine - while perhaps doing less work for the other bodyparts.

Medical Warning and Disclaimer: Please get a physical before starting any of the programs at bilpearl.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.

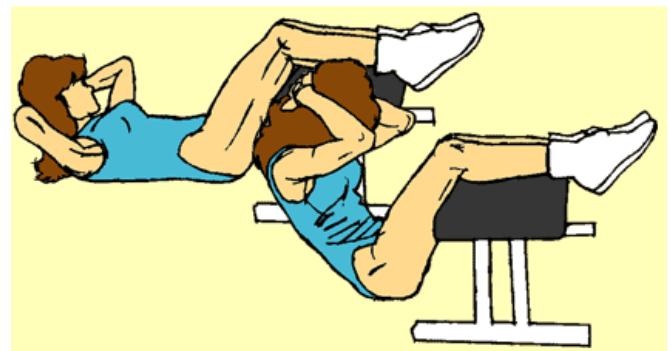
Should any exercises in these routines be uncomfortable or dangerous to do because of some sort of physical impairment you have, please substitute another exercise for the same body part which will not aggravate the condition. There is a tremendous variety of exercises available for any body part, as 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.

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

Exercise	Sets	Reps
1) Heel-High Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals	1	50-100
2) Alternated Dip Stand Leg Raise - Lower Abdominals	1	25-50
3) Seated Medium-Stance Leg Press on Machine - Thighs	5	10
4) Thigh Biceps Curl on Leg Extension Machine - Hamstrings	5	10
5) Standing Toe Raise on Wall Calf Machine - Main Calf Muscles	5	20-25
6) Heel-High Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals	1	50-100
7) Alternated Dip Stand Leg Raise - Lower Abdominals	1	25-50
8) Medium-Grip Incline Barbell Bench Press - Upper Pectorals	5	8
9) Standing Low-Pulley Deltoid Raise - Outer Deltoids	5	8
10) Heel-High Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals	1	50-100
11) Alternated Dip Stand Leg Raise - Lower Abdominals	1	25-50
12) Seated Two-Arm Low Lat Pull-In - Lower Lats and Upper Back	5	8
13) Hyper-Extension - Lower Back	5	15-20
14) Heel-High Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals	1	50-100
15) Alternated Dip Stand Leg Raise - Lower Abdominals	1	25-50
16) Standing Close-Grip EZ-Curl Bar Triceps Curl - Triceps	5	8
17) Seated Alternated Dumbbell Curl - Biceps	5	8

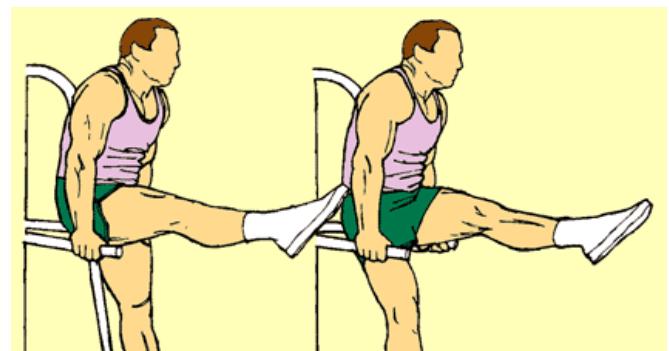
1) Heel-High Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals

- Lie on floor with lower legs on top of bench.
- Position body so thighs are at a 45 degree angle.
- With hands behind head, pull up as far as possible.
- Return to starting position.
- Do not swing body up and down but concentrate on abdominal muscles.
- Exhale up, inhale down.
- To make harder, hold light weight on chest.



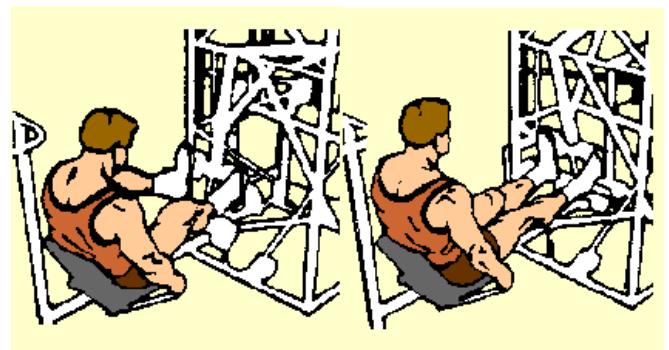
2) Alternated Dip Stand Leg Raise - Lower Abdominals

- Get on dip stand facing out.
- Arms straight, legs locked.
- Raise right leg up until parallel to floor.
- As you lower right leg, start raising left leg.
- Inhale on right, exhale on left.



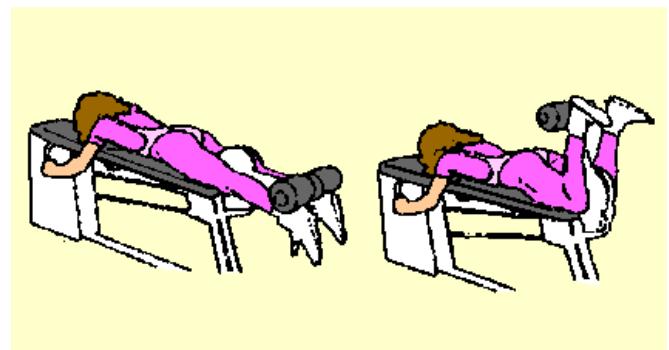
3) Seated Medium-Stance Leg Press on Machine - Thighs

- Adjust seat so upper thighs are nearly vertical to floor in contracted position.
- Hold hand rails under buttocks.
- Place feet on top pads.
- Press out until thighs are straight, knees locked.
- Let weight stack down until it nearly touches remaining plates.
- Keep knees slightly out.
- Inhale down, exhale up.



4) 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.



5) Standing Toe Raise on Wall Calf Machine - Main Calf Muscles

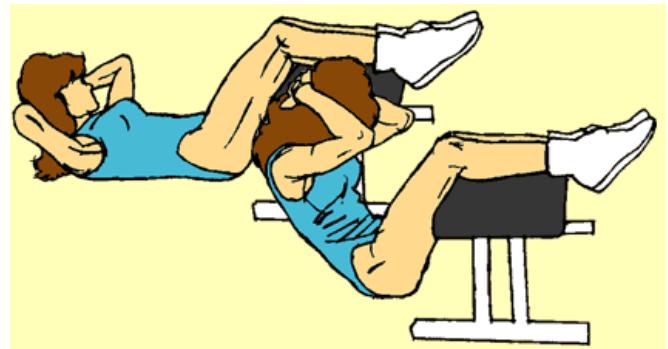
- Position shoulders under bars of wall calf machine.
- Stand erect with balls of feet on foot pad.
- Keep back straight, head up, legs locked.
- Do not let hips move backward or forward.
- Raise up on toes as high as possible.
- Hold position momentarily, then return to starting position.
- Inhale up, exhale down.



6) Heel-High Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals

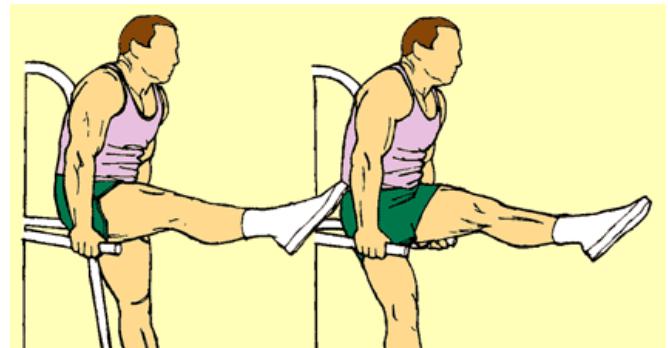
- Lie on floor with lower legs on top of bench.

- Position body so thighs are at a 45 degree angle.
- With hands behind head, pull up as far as possible.
- Return to starting position.
- Do not swing body up and down but concentrate on abdominal muscles.
- Exhale up, inhale down.
- To make harder, hold light weight on chest.



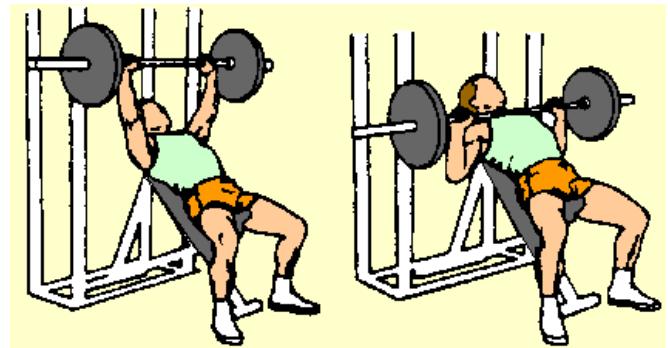
7) Alternated Dip Stand Leg Raise - Lower Abdominals

- Get on dip stand facing out.
- Arms straight, legs locked.
- Raise right leg up until parallel to floor.
- As you lower right leg, start raising left leg.
- Inhale on right, exhale on left.



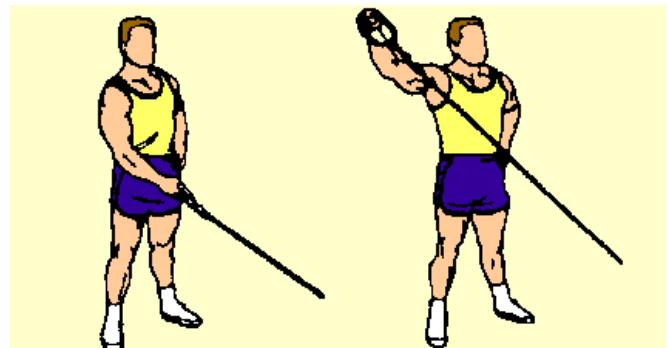
8) Medium-Grip Incline Barbell Bench Press - Upper Pectorals

- Lie on incline bench, feet flat on floor.
- Hold barbell about 6" wider than shoulder width.
- Lower bar to chest about 3" above 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, do not arch back too sharply.
- Do not raise hips off bench.
- Inhale down, exhale up.
- Can also be done with close or wide grip.



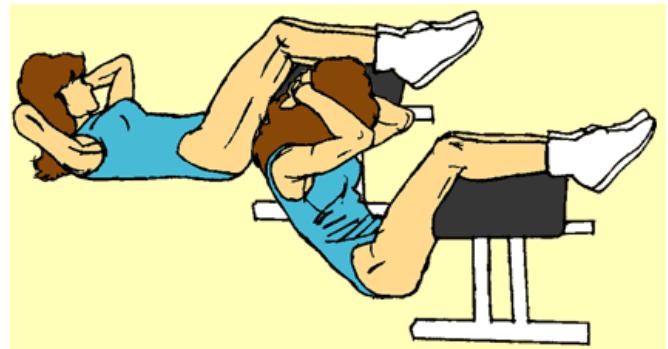
9) Standing Low-Pulley Deltoid Raise - Outer Deltoids

- Stand with left side facing wall pulley.
- Hold bottom handle of pulley with right hand.
- Stand erect, far enough from machine to create tension on cable.
- Right hand should be in line with groin area of left side.
- Raise pulley in semicircular motion, arm straight, elbow locked, until arm is just above parallel to right shoulder.
- Lower to starting position using same path.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Reverse position and repeat with left arm.
- Can also be done with pulley handle to rear.



10) Heel-High Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals

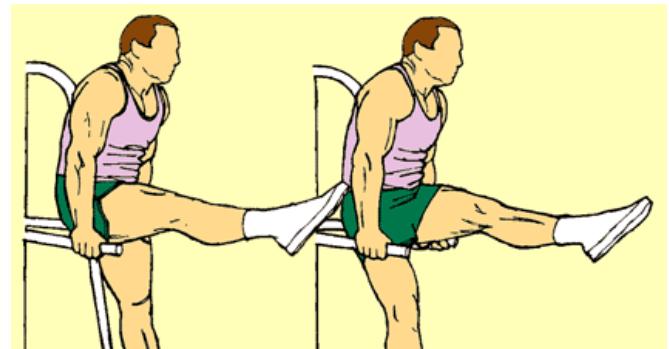
- Lie on floor with lower legs on top of bench.
- Position body so thighs are at a 45 degree angle.
- With hands behind head, pull up as far as possible.
- Return to starting position.
- Do not swing body up and down but concentrate on abdominal muscles.
- Exhale up, inhale down.
- To make harder, hold light weight on chest.



11) Alternated Dip Stand Leg Raise - Lower Abdominals

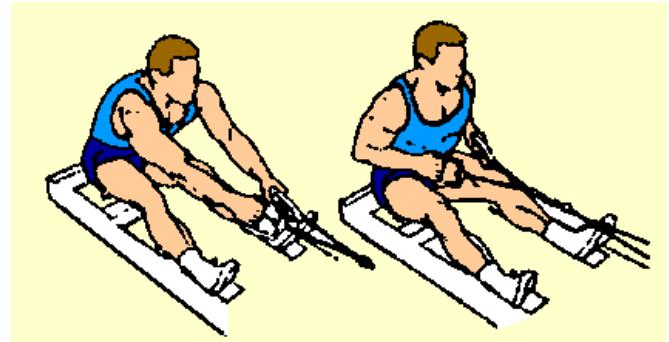
- Get on dip stand facing out.

- Arms straight, legs locked.
- Raise right leg up until parallel to floor.
- As you lower right leg, start raising left leg.
- Inhale on right, exhale on left.



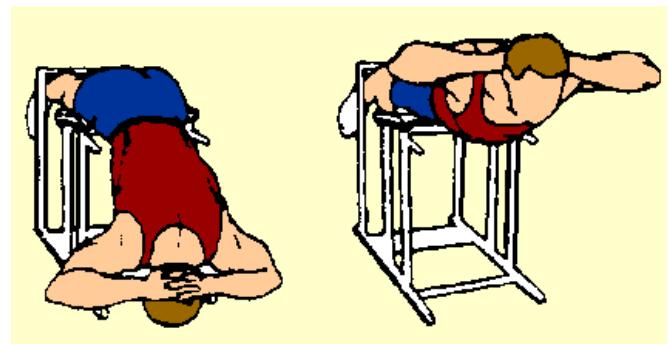
12) Seated Two-Arm Low Lat Pull-In - Lower Lats and Upper Back

- Sit on floor in front of low pulley.
- Place feet against object for support.
- Hold low pulley handles.
- Bend forward throughout the exercise, do not go back and forth at waist.
- Pull handles directly to sides of chest just below pectorals.
- Return weight stacks to starting position.
- Inhale at beginning, exhale at end of repetition.
- Can also be done one arm at a time.



13) Hyper-Extension - Lower Back

- Extend upper body over end of high bench.
- Lock legs under support.
- End of bench should be at hips.
- Bend down at waist so upper body is vertical to floor.
- Place hands behind head.
- Raise torso straight up until slightly past parallel.
- Return to starting position.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- Can also be done with weight behind neck to increase resistance.



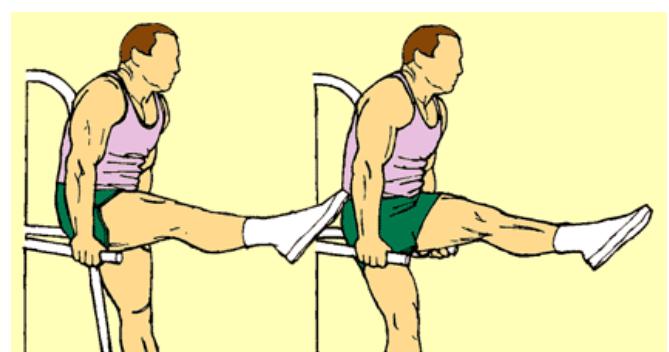
14) Heel-High Sit-Up - Upper Abdominals

- Lie on floor with lower legs on top of bench.
- Position body so thighs are at a 45 degree angle.
- With hands behind head, pull up as far as possible.
- Return to starting position.
- Do not swing body up and down but concentrate on abdominal muscles.
- Exhale up, inhale down.
- To make harder, hold light weight on chest.



15) Alternated Dip Stand Leg Raise - Lower Abdominals

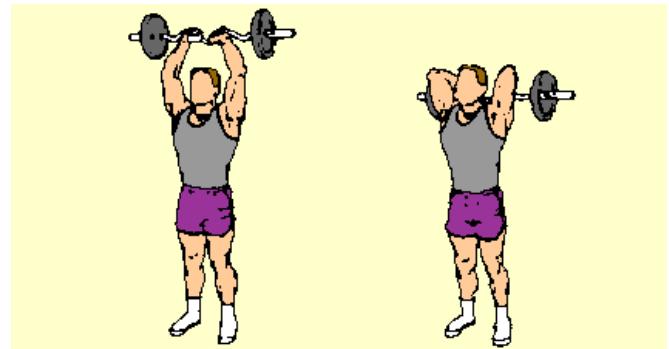
- Get on dip stand facing out.
- Arms straight, legs locked.
- Raise right leg up until parallel to floor.
- As you lower right leg, start raising left leg.
- Inhale on right, exhale on left.



16) Standing Close-Grip EZ-Curl Bar Triceps Curl - Triceps

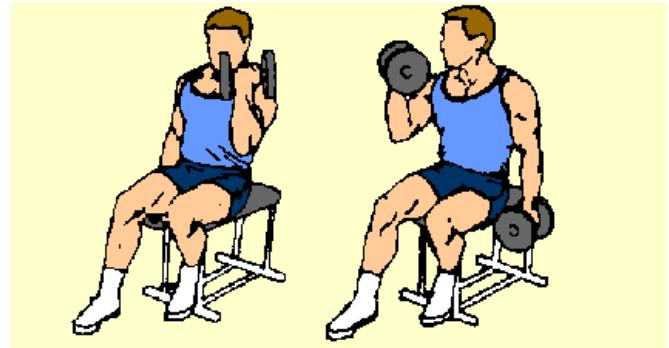
- Use closest hand grip spacing possible on EZ-Curl bar, palms down.

- 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.



17) Seated Alternated Dumbbell Curl - Biceps

- Hold dumbbells.
- Sit at end of bench, feet firmly on floor.
- Keep back straight, head up.
- Start with dumbbell's at arms' length, palms in.
- Curl dumbbell in right hand with palm in until past thigh, then turn 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.



Training Suggestions for Month 9

- 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.
- On all the exercises where a rep range is indicated, 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 by the last week.
- **Don't train to failure.** The last rep of each set should feel difficult but should not be an all-out effort.
- Increase the poundages in each exercise as your strength increases. The objective is to always make the last rep 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!