

# Muscle Building Mania

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## Introduction to Body Building

This book is an exploration. We will explore the fascinating history of body building, which can be traced as far back as the 11th Century, up to the 19th Century when it arrived on the North American scene.

We will explore how to build your body and muscles, body building and weight lifting equipment, the “right” and the “dark” side of dietary supplements as well as the importance of proper nutrition for the serious body builder.

No discussion of body and muscle building would be complete without covering consumer health fraud. Bogus claims and promises of unrealistic results have been around for decades. The explosion of marketing on the internet has, unfortunately, created an exponential increase in unsavoury providers ready and willing to bilk unsuspecting consumers.

Muscle Mania will explore package labelling and what you should know about before you buy. The content we cover presents a broad outline rather than substantive personal recommendations. Nothing within should be construed as anything more than educational and should never replace medical advice from a professional physician.

We will take a look at the different types of exercise equipment that is available to bodybuilders and what considerations you need to keep in mind when shopping for your own equipment or using the services of a gym.

What could be more important than your diet and nutrition? It's critical to your success when bodybuilding. We'll give you several recipes that are not only prepared specifically for bodybuilders, but that provide you with a breakdown of calories, grams of protein, grams of carbohydrates, grams of fat and the carb-protein-fat percentage ratio. You will be amazed at just how tasty and nutritious a bodybuilding diet can be.

## THE HISTORY OF BODY BUILDING

Athletes in 11th Century India used to lift carved stone dumbbell weights. These were called "Nals." Oddly enough, they were very much like modern day fitness equipment. It is purported that gymnasiums were existent in the same time period and by the 16th Century it is said that body building was one of Indias' favourite pastimes.

Body building was a mainstay of the athletic subculture of the ancient Greek and later Roman empires.

North Americans were first introduced to body building through the "strongman" at travelling circus sideshows and carnivals in the middle of the 19th Century.

The first modern Olympics was held in 1896 where there were two weightlifting events.

A German named Eugene Sandow is credited with inventing many of the contemporary body building techniques used even today. He began his performance with feats of strength even adapting various "poses" that demonstrated his musculature much as modern day body builders do.

Sandow travelled to London in 1899 and opened his first "Physical Culture Studio." A good businessman, he sold products by mail and published his own magazine. He ultimately created a "chain" of 20 studios throughout England.

Sandow is also credited with the first body building competition. Called the "Great Competition," it was held on September 14, 1901. Held at the Royal Albert Hall, it was a complete sell-out attracting hundreds of spectators and causing an immense traffic jam. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was one of the 3 judges.

While Sandow was busily creating his studios in England, another legend was gestating in North America.

Born in the Ozarks in 1868, Bernarr Mc Fadden was frail and sickly as a child. He learned as a teenager, that he could build health and strength by working outdoors. By age 25 he was selling exercise equipment and went on to become an icon in the publishing industry building an empire based on health, fitness, nutrition and exercise publications.

Branded as eccentric, flamboyant and a "kook," he remained fit and active up until his death in 1955. Unfortunately, his own belief in "self treatment" served to be his undoing waiting too long for treatment of a bladder problem. Many of his principles are still practiced today and his works appear to be making a "comeback."

# BASICS OF BUILDING MUSCLE

There are as many varied opinions on what “plan” one should follow to build muscle as there are people who have those opinions. On one thing they do agree, however. You must have a regimen.

You can begin by defining your objective. Why are you interested in body building? What do you hope to accomplish? What is your ultimate goal?

If this sounds like “Goal Setting 101,” guess what? It is! You need to clearly define your “why” before you can move on to “how.”

It’s all about commitment and belief. There is an abundance of information about how to begin and conduct your journey, but without a burning desire to achieve, you are doomed to inevitable failure. First things first.

-Before you even think about your exercise routine...

-Before you begin researching a nutritional program...

-Before you shop for supplements...

Ask yourself the following questions:

Do I believe this is possible for me?

Am I willing to focus, commit and do whatever it takes?

If you answered “yes” to these two questions, the seed has been planted and you are ready to begin.

While the details and sequential recommendations for body building vary there are some basic questions that apply to the process no matter what program you choose to follow.

- How do I build muscle?
- How do I strengthen muscle?
- Am I healthy enough to begin a muscle building routine?
- What should I eat?
- How often should I eat?
- Should I eat at different intervals throughout the day?
- Is there a specific diet for building muscle?
- How many calories should I eat?
- Should I take supplements?

In the following chapters we will endeavour to present you with an overview that will assist in preparing you for the launch of your muscle and body building lifestyle. It is indeed a lifestyle and you must be prepared for the rigors of change, not only to your body, but mentally as well.

You should always check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program. Lifting too much weight (especially for people with high blood pressure) or doing too many repetitions can be extremely harmful.

# BODY BUILDING FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT!

Where do you begin? Fortunately, there are more choices available today than in any other time in history. The fitness craze has opened many doors of opportunity and alternatives for the average person seeking a healthier lifestyle. This is a serendipity for the serious body builder. The “corner gym” is fast becoming as popular as the “corner pub.”

There was a time when the only “equipment” a serious body builder had were barbells and benches. Often a trip to the gym meant entering a dark, cave-like atmosphere in a less than desirable area of larger cities. By contrast, the gyms of today are usually bright, cheerful, open facilities boasting the latest in equipment and amenities. You can find them in the most upscale neighbourhoods and double as popular meeting and greeting places.

Most offer a variety of membership packages and many will offer a brief trial period allowing you to “test” the facility to determine if it meets your needs. When you do make a decision to join a fitness facility, there are a number of points to consider.

Choosing a quality fitness facility or health club requires caution. The following guidelines can help:

- Shop around. Ask friends, co-workers, and your physician for recommendations.
- Call several clubs to find ones that match your interests and budget.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau for reliability reports on clubs you are considering.
- Visit the club at the time of day you will use it.
- Talk to members and staff.
- Are the hours and location convenient?
- Does the club have facilities and services that suit your needs?
- Are the equipment, exercise areas, and locker rooms clean and well-maintained?
- Is the facility overcrowded?
- Does the club limit new membership to prevent future crowding?
- Is the atmosphere friendly?
- What are the qualifications of the staff?
- Do they have appropriate education and training?
- Do they take an interest in and assist with individual goals and progress?
- Carefully consider the contract. Take a copy home to read thoroughly before signing. Stay away from clubs that pressure you to sign on the spot!
- Does the contract list all services and facilities? All oral promises should be written down.
- What is the total cost and payment schedule, including enrolment fees and finance charges?
- Do some services cost extra?

- How long is a membership term? A short-term membership is usually best in case you find yourself unmotivated or the club closes.
- Does the contract allow for a try-out period? Will the trial fee be applicable to longer-term membership?
- What are your cancellation and refund rights if you move, become disabled, or the club closes?
- Does a three-day cancellation policy apply if you change your mind shortly after signing up?
- Make sure the club has met state bonding and licensing requirements.

Finally, never sign up with a club that has not yet opened despite any special discounts. And beware if the club asks for your credit card number or deposit check before you have read the contract.

## HOME GYM ALTERNATIVE.

If you have deep pockets, an alternative to outside facilities is purchasing equipment and building your own home gym. This can be a very expensive endeavour, but not impossible.

Your best bet is to visit local sports equipment stores to see what is available. After you get over the “sticker shock” take copious notes on each piece of equipment that will fit your personal program. If you can afford the individual pieces by all means purchase them.

However, for most new bodybuilders that kind of investment is prohibitive. A good alternative is to watch for “used” equipment. The possibilities of obtaining just what you need are very high.

Some of those possibilities are bodybuilders who have moved on to more sophisticated equipment or people who thought they would give bodybuilding a whirl only to find it just wasn't for them. Even though we caution people not to spend money on expensive equipment, there are always those who jump into any new venture blindfolded.

Some good places to shop for used equipment, are bulletin boards at local gyms, local newspaper classifieds, Thrifty Nickel and don't forget yard sales.

Next, we need to take a look at what equipment is available for the bodybuilder home gym and the purpose they serve.

### Free Weights

Free weights are the simplest and most cost effective pieces of equipment for the beginning bodybuilder. Free weights consist of barbells, dumbbells and weight plates. They are called “free weights” because they have no cables, pins or pulleys.

Available as normal weights or Olympic weights, be advised that Olympic weights are generally much more costly. The Olympic bar is also “thicker” at the ends to accommodate the larger hole present in Olympic weight plates.

Barbells come in all shapes and sizes. They consist of a bar that is usually 4' to 7' in length and can weigh from 20 to 45 pounds. Varying weights are attached to the ends of the bar. The weights are attached using collars or sleeves. You can find barbells in a “fixed collar” design. This prevents the weights from sliding off the end of the bar, but they are limiting as the weights cannot be removed. With adjustable collars you can add and remove weights to suit your own purposes.

The longer 7' bar that is generally referred to as an Olympic bar can hold 500 to 1500 pounds. As mentioned, these are usually more costly. There are also other Olympic “specialty” bars available that are designed for specific purposes such as biceps and triceps.

The weight plates that fit the ends of the bar come in standard increments of:

2 1/2 pounds

5 pounds

10 pounds  
25 pounds  
50 pounds

If you stick with cast iron weights you are pretty much guaranteed that the weights will remain constant over time as opposed to those that are plastic encased or other metals that could warp over time.

If planning to go with the “home gym” sticking with standard weights is probably best for you. One of the advantages is that you can find standard weights available as a “package” that will include your bars, weights and collars. Most standard weight packages also come with dumbbells.

You will also need to have a weight bench. There are varying types of benches. You can find adjustable types that you can set for different inclines. This is a good buy because by adjusting the incline or decline, you can create a number of different exercises to work out different muscle groups.

## **Multistation Machines**

There is no getting around it. When you begin looking at high end equipment, you can pretty much bet that you are going to have to spend quite a bit of money. These are often referred to as “home gyms.”

This piece of equipment is multi-purpose and able to serve more than one person at a time. They are designed with multiple work stations and the exercises are ones that can't be done with barbells such as leg curls, lat pull downs, leg extensions, and cable movements.

Some things you need to take under consideration with this type of equipment is the size. Do you have sufficient space to house a multistation machine? They are pretty much stationary and not designed for portability. Cost is another factor as well as who will be using the machine. If it will be used by more than one individual the cost effectiveness of such equipment increases if you are weighing the purchase against joining a club.

Obvious advantages are that you and your partner can both use the equipment simultaneously and there is the added convenience of having the ability to train in your own home.

### **Variable Resistance Machines**

What are variable resistance machines? Think Nautilus® or Bowflex®. Both are variable resistance machines that provide an alternative to free weight training.

The primary advantage is the constant resistance in the range of movement for the muscle group you are training. Another huge advantage over traditional weight training is that by working with constant resistance, you make the muscle stronger and you do it much faster than the traditional method.

This type of training also lets you deliver exactly the amount of exercise you desire to whatever specific muscle group you are working. There is the benefit of

working that resistance through a greater range of movement as you can reduce your training time.

Variable resistance can be added to your free weight training routines to get much bigger and do it much faster.

Portability can be another advantage. These pieces of equipment tend to take up less space and many can be easily broken down in just one or two steps for storage convenience when not in use.

As far as which is better, free weights or variable resistance, it all depends on what your personal preferences might be. If you have established your budget and your goals, throwing variable resistance machines into the mix might be an option.

Regardless of which options you choose, let me remind you to shop around before spending too much money. There's a good chance you can find used equipment that is just right for your purposes.

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