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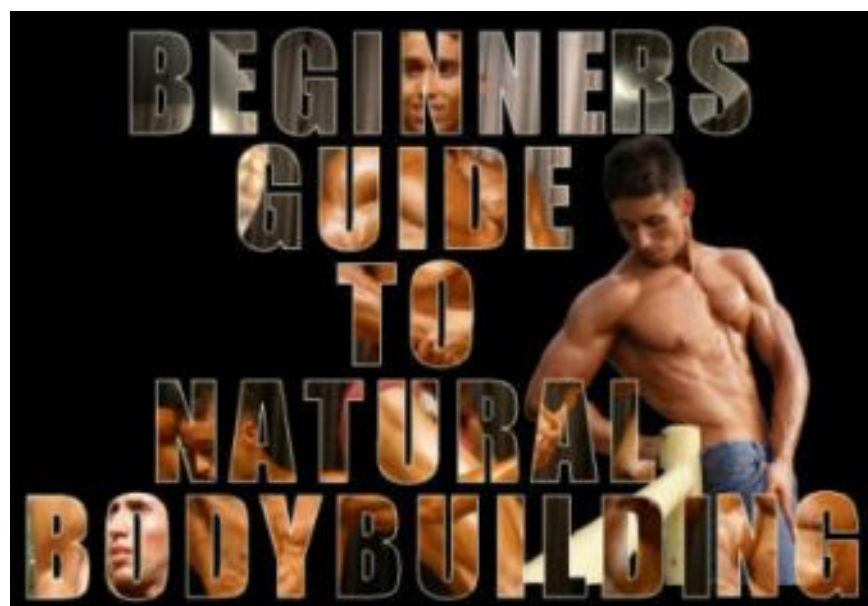
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THE BEGINNERS GUIDE TO NATURAL BODYBUILDING

Written by Ivan Blazquez



The Beginners Guide to Natural Bodybuilding is a comprehensive introduction to the world of Natural Bodybuilding by successful Natural Bodybuilder Ivan Blazquez

Most men cringe at the thought of being in a bodybuilding competition. Well, I'm here to tell you that you do not have to be this gargantuan monster to win. The key to natural bodybuilding is having good conditioning, symmetry, muscularity and conditioning. However, the most important element, though, is conditioning.

Time and time again competing and winning at bodybuilding shows, I am here to tell you that if you just come in good shape (conditioned) you will have a good shot at winning! I am referring to amateur competition and competing for the teen and even open division competitor.

For those of you interested in just competing for kicks and doing well out your first time, you should read the 8 guidelines down below or you can just read the rest of this article for your benefit of

The most important elements for you are getting down to single-digits body fat 9% or less and perfecting your mandatory poses and having some help with the competition tanning process. The most important 2 elements for you are conditioning and posing.



"if you just come in good shape (conditioned) you will place well and have a good shot at winning"

However, for the remainder of this article, I will provide a comprehensive approach to the bodybuilder who wants to not only do well, but be the best he can be in embodying the key elements of success in natural bodybuilding competition.

Genetics will ultimately place a limit on your progress, however, you will never know how far you can go until you try. Here is the underlying logic to success in a bodybuilding show.

Age

First, if one is past puberty (18 or older) it takes years of training to induce significant gains in strength and muscle size (Sale, 1988).

At first, as strength increases so does muscle size, but after these initial adaptations (i.e. initial gains become increasingly difficult, but more increasingly difficult are the muscle mass gains).

growth spurt (Sale, 1988).

Muscle size is in large part determined by genetics (Brooks et al., 1996) and training done c
puberty when physical growth is most intense (Malina et al., 2004; Pfeiffer & Francis, 1986)
30 years of age) (Lexall et al., 1988; McArdle et al., 2001).

At age 30, muscle size begins to decrease (McArdle et al., 2001), however, between 20-30
rate of increase in muscle size is not as great relatively as in late adolescent years (16-19 y
et al., 2004; Pfeiffer & Francis, 1986).

Brooks et al. (1996) reported the following:

"As with other forms of exercise, people vary in the rate at which they gain strength. variation can be attributed to the relative predominance of fast and slow twitch mc muscles...."

Several studies have shown that fiber composition is genetically determined.... Gene strong influence on the ability to gain strength, but a good training program can al your capacity within a genetically-determined 'performance envelope' (p. 393)."

This is not meant to discourage, but to report the facts of science. Everyone is different, s what you have to do to be your best.

Hansen (2005) reported the following:

"All champion bodybuilders have mesomorphic characteristics. If they didn't, they c made it to the championship level. Someone who is largely ectomorphic or endomu have the genetic makeup to become a champion bodybuilder. He can certainly imp and, in some cases, dramatically transform this body."

But to reach the top of any sport, genetics plays a role to some degree. Knowing you you design a training and nutrition program appropriate for your unique physique

Genetics

Even if one attains maximizing muscle hypertrophy (as big as you can genetically get), this is They still have to be able to nail conditioning, which in a nutshell is the capability to shred b 3-5%. So the question becomes, which approach do you go for? Size or conditioning?

Well here comes some insight into this contest prep dilemma. Even if one is big on stage, i enough, they will look smooth and not as muscular (Hansen, 2005). For someone who doesn' is absolutely shredded, they will look bigger on stage because they are harder and more de (2005).



"Even If One Attains Maximizing Muscle Hypertrophy, This Is Only Half The Battle."

What is expected is that one gets as close to looking like an anatomy chart as possible. This is a key element in doing well in a bodybuilding show, particularly as a novice and even as an open competitor. Be aware that the amount of muscle one can pack onto a frame is determined by height and genetics (Malina et al., 1996; Malina et al., 2004).

Height influences the amount of muscle fibers and length of muscle one has. The longer the limbs, the greater the potential for growth. Taller individuals have an advantage in that they have more muscle available for hypertrophy.

The shorter an individual, the less muscle is available to hypertrophy. And if we are talking about elite bodybuilders, this is more of an illusion because short guys will typically look more compact. If a bodybuilder's bodyweight is too high for a certain height (5'8" 180-200 lb of pure muscle), either this person is genetically gifted or the use of pharmaceutical assistance is evident (Kouri et al., 1995).

Remember, bodyweight can only go so high for a certain height at body fat percentages of 5-10% (Kouri et al., 1995). The amount of muscle mass we can carry drug-free is chiefly determined by genetics and training.

Body Types

Bodybuilder physiques are definitely influenced by body types as well. Mesomorphs have a competitive edge in terms of muscle denseness and size, ectomorphs do as well in terms of controlling body fat levels, endomorphs have it a little more difficult because although they can pack good muscle, the capability to show this muscle with low body fat levels is difficult (Hansen, 2005).

These 3 body types have associated metabolic rates as well (Hansen, 2005). Ectomorphs have the highest, mesomorphs next and last would be endomorphs (Hansen, 2005).

However, keep in mind that most people are neither 100% one, they are typically a combination. Nonetheless, the key to maximizing one's potential is to train as needed for your body type to come to a contest well-conditioned.

Next would be to establish proportions that are very aesthetic for your body type. For more muscular bodybuilders, hitting poses that show mass and if arms are impressive enough, hitting straight arms can be to your advantage.

For smaller bodybuilders, staying compact and perhaps showing the disappearing waist would be to your advantage. What I mean by disappearing waist is, the ability to turn your torso on various poses to appear smaller. This adds a big advantage to your proportions by making your upper and lower body appear bigger.



"Establish Proportions That Are Very Aesthetic For Your Body Type"

With all things being equal (size and conditioning), bodybuilding is a sport of illusion. The ability to highlight your strengths and hide your weaknesses can make a difference in placing down or up a few spots.

Symmetry

Good proportions entails having a wide back (strong lats) and small waist (great conditioning). The waist should be equally as big as the calves and having all muscle groups developed (Hansen, 2005; Wilton, 2005). Symmetry involves having both sides (i.e. right and left arm) being as close to equal as possible. Muscularity involves having striated and dense muscles.

However, the most important component in natural shows is conditioning. This involves having low body fat percentage, which allows the muscles to be seen with more clarity.

For a better idea of what it would take to compete, simply look online for local competition or attend a show as a spectator. The shows are very affordable with a gate cost typically ranging from \$5-10 for the prejudging (morning show) and \$15-30 for the finals (evening show).

Don't be surprised if you see some men on stage who don't look the part at all, this is typical. You will also likely see some men in phenomenal shape on stage as well with many being in-between.

Anyone Can Compete

The bottom line is that anyone can compete in a bodybuilding contest. It is simply a matter of setting health goals for yourself and working towards those goals. In my opinion, a bodybuilding contest is more than a reward at the end of a training period. A bodybuilding contest is a landmark event that celebrates your wonderful achievements in health and fitness.

If I were to recommend a book and movie for bodybuilding, I would recommend the 2 books: *Bodybuilding: The New Encyclopedia of Modern Bodybuilding* by John Hansen and *The New Encyclopedia of Modern Bodybuilding* by Arnold Schwarzenegger and *Pumping Iron*.

Although natural bodybuilding is somewhat different, this movie is a nice documentary of the competition experiences of many bodybuilders of the 70's and it is also very motivating!

Water intake before a contest has been a debatable issue for many years in bodybuilding. In the past, it was thought that one has to feel their worst to look their best. This is completely and utterly not true.

To be your best, you have to look and feel your best. This comes from eating very healthy, training hard and believing in yourself, even when nobody else does. As far as water intake is concerned, drink plenty of water and stay hydrated. Being dehydrated is very unhealthy for the body and is a prime example of doing things the wrong way.

The key requisites for competing as a natural bodybuilder and doing well are as follows:

1. Learn The 4 Relaxed Poses:

Front relaxed, left/right side relaxed and back relaxed.

2. Learn The 8 Compulsory Poses:

Front double biceps, front lat spread, right/left side chest, right/left side triceps, rear lat spread, rear double biceps, most abdominal and most muscular.

Learn all these poses properly and practice these poses often until they become second nature. You should feel relaxed and they come natural to you. This will take months of practice.

3. Train To Be As Strong As You Can Be:

This aspect of training involves training in two particular ways. First, training with heavy weights to increase muscle size and density and second, training with high-volume to stimulate muscle shape and definition.

The heavy training will consist of major muscle group lifts such as the squat, leg press, bench press and deadlifts utilizing a repetition range from 6-10 reps, and sometimes going 2-5 reps with short rest periods (~1-3 minutes).

Do not concern yourself with how much your peers lift or what you read in a magazine. Instead, focus on making personal improvements in your own strength. I like to gauge strength in relative terms rather than absolute terms.



In other words, a 220 lb. man who can bench press 300 lb. is actually weaker than a 160 lb. man who can bench press 225 lb. This was determined and proven true simply by dividing the amount of weight lifted by bodyweight (i.e. $225/160 = 1.4$ vs. $300/220 = 1.3$).

On-stage the 160 lb. man will look more impressive because pound for pound, he is stronger. I have competed before and beaten men who were over 200 lbs. I weigh a mere 160 lbs, but with the right training it is, my muscles take on a more impressive and stronger look on-stage.

The high-volume training consists of training the same major muscle groups and also the cardio with higher repetitions (8-12) and lighter weights with short rest periods (30-45-seconds).

This mode of training creates muscle shape, definition and tone. It is not by some magical means that muscles become defined, but rather, it is simply the high-caloric cost of this type of training that burns fat more effectively than the heavier lifting.

Both modes of training are necessary to create an optimal physique for natural bodybuilding. Cardio and resistance train 2-4 days/week. 2 days being minimal, 3 being optimal, 4 being a little better.

4. Become As Fit Aerobically As You Can Be:

This mode of training involves standard aerobic exercise to make the body a more efficient Not to mention, it will enhance your quality of life and longevity.

Too often many aspiring bodybuilders make the mistake of thinking aerobic exercise makes they just avoid this kind of exercise all-together. This is simply a mistake to avoid this kind aerobic exercise will strip away the fat covering those muscles, which will create the reality more defined muscles.

The type of aerobic training that is best for bodybuilding would be high-intensity interval tr example, a typical HIIT workout would entail maybe riding on an exercise bike pedaling very f (i.e. 100 revolutions per minute [RPM]) and then pedaling slower (i.e. 60-70 RPM) for a 60 : You would repeat this cycle perhaps 10 times, which would equate to a 15 minute high-octa workout.

Related HIT Articles:

[High Intensity Training - Yumon Eaton's Modified HIT Hybred](#)

[Best Split Training for Bigger Muscles](#)

[High Intensity Interval Training - Less is More](#)

Now, be aware that this mode of training is very intense and one should listen to their body other words, perhaps 2-3 HIIT workouts per week would suffice. 1-3 HIIT workouts per week

For the other aerobic workouts, one could train at a moderate-to-low intensity. These lower workouts also burn fat and allow the body to recover when muscles may be sore.

Effective cardio typically lasts from 30-60 minutes with 30-minutes being minimal, 45-min and 60-minutes being maximal. If trying to get lean, one should perform aerobic exercise 3 being minimal, 4 days being optimal and 5 days being just a little better than 4.

Effective cardio typically lasts from 20-60 minutes with 20-minutes being minimal, 30-40 l 60 minutes being maximal. The reason for the range in minutes is indicative of everyone ha bodytypes and corresponding metabolic rates. Ideally, doing the least amount of cardio tha bang for the buck would be best.

5. Become Flexible:

Having good flexibility is absolutely important in longevity in fitness and bodybuilding. Being of injury and prevents overuse problems from exercise. I have taken yoga classes and I abso They not only enhance body flexibility but they also train the mind and you learn how to conn body together as one.

This is really what bodybuilding is about. It is truly a science in maximizing the body's ability with greater ease in everyday living. Additionally, yoga is great for improving body control, endurance. The poses in yoga are so ideal for bodybuilding. They teach the artistic side of p lacking in today's bodybuilding shows. It is one thing to have a great body, but it is another thing to make a great body move with grace and fluidity.

6. Eat Right:

Eating right is more simple than one would think. The debate of all calories being created equal leads many to frustration over what the percentage of carbs, proteins and fats should be. However, the concept that holds true is that if you burn more calories than you take in, one will lose weight. However, the process can be complex.

The Art of Nutrition



BY STEVEN THOMPSON

Related Article:

[The Art of Nutrition](#)

My caloric breakdown ranges from carbs being ~55-65%, protein 20-30% and fats 10-20%. I focus on high-quality foods (rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants) and to reduce low quality foods (but low in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants), carbs being ~45-60%, protein 20-35% and fats 10-20%.

If there is one book I would recommend on nutrition it would be Volumetrics by Barbara Rolls. It is a New York Times best seller and is a great book to get you started in the right direction.

When preparing for a contest, contest preparation should range from 8-14 weeks. However, the longer you are out of shape, the longer this time period will become. I have seen many people preparing for 20 weeks out! This is simply a mistake by letting oneself get that out-of-shape.

I believe staying within striking distance is the key to a more healthy and less painful contest. This year, I prepped only 8 weeks out for my first show, dropping from 168 lbs to 160 lbs. I stayed in the off-season and then making subtle changes in contest season. The body doesn't like extremes, it thrives on balance, so subtle changes work best.

7. Recovery And Rest:

Everyone is different, however, ideally 6-8 hours of sleep a night is what is needed for optimal

Rest is probably more important than the training, since the body does its repairs on the muscle during sleep. The key is to get good quality deep sleep.

One person may only need 6 hours of sleep whereas another person may need 8 hours of sleep. It is enough sleep to where you are not tired during the day or fatigued more than normal.

8. Purchasing Contest Necessities:

Posing trunks and tanning oils are a necessity if one is to compete. A great website one can go to for supplies is Bodybuilding.com. This is simply the #1 source of information on bodybuilding.

Summary

Natural bodybuilding can be a very healthy endeavor if done the right way. Natural bodybuilding is how to train smarter, eat healthier and relax more. It is a delicate balance of mind, body and spirit together as one to create a healthy and highly-functional person.

Ivan Blazquez



For more information on posing and contest supplies one can go to Bodybuilding.com. Good luck on your journey to competing are as follows:

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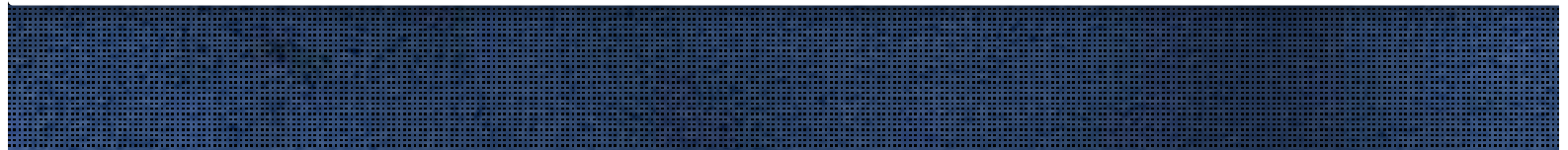
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