

Steroids for Bodybuilding
A practical guide to physique enhancement with pharmaceuticals
by Rash Riprock

Who this article is for

Hopefully the title explained it all, but let's make doubly sure. If you're thinking of using steroids to enhance your performance in a particular sport, be it football, track, powerlifting, or Strongman events, this article isn't directly aimed at you. Though you'll still pick up some valuable tips, my area of expertise has been the use of steroids to enhance the *physique*, along the standards of top-level competitive bodybuilding.

In other words, I've learned how to get as close as any of us are genetically able to approximate the appearance of the big, veiny bastards in *Flex* magazine. My specialty is improving the cosmetic appearance of myself and my clients (looking great naked), not making them better athletes. I must also state for the record that my experience with some drugs is somewhat limited, at least when compared to others. For instance, I've never used growth hormone, insulin, IGF-1, or Synthol.

I do have fairly extensive experience with a wide variety of commonly used steroids and ancillary drugs, and they've delivered excellent results for me as well as dozens I've personally coached. For the vast majority of steroid-using bodybuilders, the basics are really all you will ever need anyway. Not many of us are going to have to worry about being compared on stage with Ronnie Coleman and Jay Cutler with a big cash prize at stake. Nope, we just want to look like muscular stallions.

What steroids have done for me

Compared to most, I came to steroids late in the game. At 27 years old, I'd already been training consistently for 13 years, and had competed in ten contests since the age of 19. By then I'd reached a level of size and strength considered elite for a natural bodybuilder, weighing around 215 pounds at 5' 8" and with lifts like a 600-pound barbell squat, seated dumbbell presses with 140's, and barbell rows with 365.

Still, I wasn't satisfied with my physique at all. At 215 I was very smooth, and the last time I dieted down for a drug-free contest I was a mere 181 pounds. My heroes had been guys like Rich Gaspari, Dorian Yates, Flex Wheeler, and Arnold. All of them had those incredibly full, round muscles with all sorts of nasty veins, striations, and deep separations that are only possible with the assistance of anabolics. Being natural, I could be somewhat big but smooth, or ripped and stringy. Try as I might, I found that being very big and ripped at the same time was a pipe dream for me, unless I took the steroid plunge. I knew I wouldn't be happy until I had at least a passing resemblance to the type of physique I idolized, so at the end of 1996 I began my very first cycle.

Since then I've lost exact count, but I estimate I've done a total of twelve steroid cycles, most in the range of 8-10 weeks, but most recently a full 15 weeks. In the

beginning my weekly milligram totals were typically 700-1000, though my last and best cycle to date built up from 1,500 mg to just over three grams during the final weeks.



One of my recent stacks.

Has my body changed? Has it ever. At my last show, where I won the Heavyweight division in an NPC National qualifier, I weighed in at 207 pounds with shredded glutes and as much muscle density as most national-level heavyweight competitors. Only a true bodybuilding fan would know the difference between me and a pro — in fact, the average Joe in the gym usually assumes I *am* a pro. I even have a pretty loyal legion of fans who chime in with an average of 20-30 e-mails a day and pay for my advice, doubtless because my physique gives me a certain degree of credibility. So you could say that steroids have allowed me to make my bodybuilding dreams a reality in several ways.





What steroids can do for you

I can't promise that you'll make the same improvements with steroids that I have over the past few years. You may have more genetic limitations than I do, but then again you may have better genetics and are capable of much greater gains.

Equally important to genetics is drive and lifestyle. I'm intensely driven to consistently train to my utmost abilities, using the heaviest weights possible in good form, and never settling for anything less than total annihilation of a bodypart. Being self-employed, I also have the opportunity to train and eat whenever I please, even taking the occasional afternoon nap if I so desire. I never miss meals, and use virtually every type of legal supplement available as well. I make sure I get plenty of sleep and avoid stress. Finally, I read every book, magazine, and Web site available to glean as much information about training and nutrition as I can.

In other words, I do everything possible to optimize the perfect environment for muscle growth. You may not be willing or able to duplicate this tunnel-vision lifestyle. But if you are, the addition of steroids to your bodybuilding will make a dramatic difference in your results. Be warned, though, steroids do not build muscle on their own. Without proper training and eating, your results will certainly be compromised. *T-mag* is a great place to start if you're not sure, so start reading all the back issues. And I do mean *all* of them. If you're too lazy to do that, you really have no business using steroids. I consider steroids a powerful tool to compliment the hard work and dedication of the hardcore bodybuilder, not a substitute for them or a shortcut.

Finally, if you're wondering how much size and strength you will gain on x amount of drugs for x amount of time, this is something you'll only find out when you try. I know the *T-mag* forum is constantly barraged with posts along the lines of "How much will I gain?" but this is a question no one can answer with any degree of accuracy. We all react slightly differently to steroids.

Bulking up

Most novice steroids users are interested in one thing and one thing only — "I wanna get huuuuuge!!" And of course, they want to be a freak *yesterday*, not five years from now. The majority of my cycles have had this goal in mind as well. One of the principles I believe is that anyone will gain more mass overall if they have waited until a very solid foundation of muscle has been built naturally, as I did. I know there are rare exceptions to this rule, but my observations in watching men and women with longer and shorter training backgrounds bears this out in most cases. Part of this is most likely related to being forced to learn more about proper training and eating precisely because you're clean and have to fight for every ounce of muscle. This primes you for better results once you add drugs into the mix. That said, here's what I have learned about bulking.

The best steroid cycles for piling on sheer muscle mass always include at least one of the more highly androgenic compounds, such as Testosterone, Dianabol, or Anadrol. With them, you always want to use something that leans more toward the anabolic end of the spectrum. (See Cy Willson's Steroids for Dummies for more info on stacking protocols link [here](#)).

Deca is by far the most popular steroid to combine with an androgen for this purpose, though lately trenbolone acetate is moving in fast to take its top spot. Equipoise and Winstrol are also used quite often. My best gains have been on these particular combinations:

Test/Deca

D-bol/Equipoise/Winstrol

Test/tren/d-bol

Test/tren/deca

There are many possible permutations to choose from, and you may very likely be limited to what is available and affordable to you. As far as the dosages, this is something that tends to fluctuate from individual to individual, though it does seem that nearly everyone needs to continually up their dosages as they do more cycles to see similar results. For instance, I've found that in my early cycles I could make very good gains on as little as 500 mg of Test and 400 mg of deca a week, but now I need to use at least twice the amount of both for the same effect. The wise method is to always start out as low as possible, and only increase dosages if and when you find you need to. Most steroid novices, especially if they train and eat like champions, will be able to accrue very satisfactory gains on as little as 600 mg total a week.

As for the training, the best thing about steroids is that they allow you to train with greater intensity and higher volume and frequency, and still make very steady progress. Before some of you drug-free guys get all huffy and say that you train just as hard or harder than any steroid user, I have to be blunt and say sorry, you don't. Believe me, I trained like a demon when I was clean, but drugs have allowed me to take it to a whole new level of raw power, pain, rage, and mind-blowing pumps. I'm able to use techniques like forced reps, drop sets, and supersets at nearly every workout and still be able to recover and grow.

How frustrating it was as a natural bodybuilder to train so hard only to experience occasional dribbles of growth every few months! Overtraining is still a danger, but its

threat isn't nearly as pronounced when you have plenty of extra hormones to repair muscle tissue damage and synthesize protein at an accelerated rate. While I don't think many of us would do well on the twice-daily, six day a week split that some of the top amateurs and pro's follow, steroids will allow you to hit a bodypart more frequently. Doesn't it make sense that your chest will be bigger if it can recover and grow from six or seven good workouts a month as opposed to four? That's what I've found to be true.

Eating is a critical component of gaining muscle mass when you're using steroids. The two main things to keep in mind at all times are protein intake and total calories. This is especially true if you lean toward the hard-gainer, ectomorphic body type. Regardless, it's almost impossible to overdo either. I wouldn't classify myself as a hard gainer, but even I found that making gains in muscle mass was a struggle when I tried eating only "clean" food.

After watching the progress of guys like Lee Priest, who was famous for eating prodigious amounts of junk food in the off-season, I decided to try it. During a cycle last year, I visited some type of buffet-style restaurant at least once a week and would eat for a solid hour or more. First I would make sure I took care of my protein by eating enough fried chicken, fish sticks, meatballs, or whatever to reach about 100 grams. After this I would go for things like soup, rolls with butter, fruit, pasta, French fries, and ultimately cookies and ice cream.

Once a week I would order out for pizza and put a whole large pie away by myself. Late at night, if I was hungry, I would have a protein shake of about 50 grams, and then eat several bowls of such sugary cereals as Cocoa Puffs, Lucky Charms, Honeycombs, or Multi-Grain Cheerios. The rest of my meals were standard clean food like red meat or chicken with rice or potatoes.

My protein intake was always in excess of 2 grams per pound of bodyweight each day, and carbs were twice that. If you're thinking I got fatter than the WWF's Rikishi on this meal plan, you're wrong. My attitude was that because I was training so hard and using the drugs, everything I ate turned into muscle, and this belief proved true. I went from 210 at the start of the cycle to 232 at the end, with no loss in definition. I wasn't ripped by any means, but I was in pretty hard condition with veins popping out on the chest and front delts, and the abs visible but blurry. I've also seen dozens of other bodybuilders successfully employ the "gluttonous pig strategy" while on gear.

Getting ripped while maintaining muscle mass

Cy Willson covered this topic very well in his article, "[Steroids for Dieting](#)," but I have a couple points to add, since I've actually gone through the adventure a couple times. For a competitive bodybuilder, steroids offer a giant advantage during the dieting process. With them, you can lower calories, do quite a bit of intense cardiovascular training, and not have to be concerned with the danger of losing lean muscle tissue while shedding the bodyfat.

Depending on how lean you want to get, you'll need to use substantially more gear to accomplish this than when you're on a mass-gaining cycle. This is because getting down to low, single-digit body-fat levels is an assault on all the systems of the body. I'm not talking about just seeing a clear six-pack here like the Body-for-Life types would consider ripped. I'm talking about cross-striations on your pecs, triceps, serratus, quads, and traps. Don't forget enough prominent vascularity to plot a road trip to Vegas, and skin so thin that you resemble a rabbit with the fur peeled off.

To get into this extreme condition, which has become the standard even at the amateur level of competitive bodybuilding, you need to use a hefty dosage of steroids to maintain your muscle size and fullness. Here's a look at one of the later weeks in my recent pre-contest cycle:

Weekly totals:

Testosterone blend 1000 mg

Trenbolone acetate 750 mg

Winstrol 700 mg

Equipoise 400 mg

Clomid 350 mg

GAC Heat Miser* 28 ml.

*a bootleg thermogenic drug combining T-3, clenbuterol, and yohimbine in an oral solution.

Obviously, some of you won't have to use this amount, but for me to hold onto 207 pounds and get shredded, this is what was needed. When I've tried lighter cycles and dieted, I still wound up losing muscle. Some of you may need to use even more than I do. This is something you'll have to determine on your own. One thing I want to stress is that just as steroids won't lead to optimal mass gains unless the training and eating are spot on, it's the same thing with getting lean. If you cheat on your diet and skimp on your cardio, no amount of steroids or fat-burning drugs will give you striated glutes.

Health, legal, and financial issues

It's now my obligation and duty to cover all the potential downsides to using the types and amounts of steroids necessary to build the physique of an elite bodybuilder. First are health issues. It's neither completely safe nor healthy to use large quantities of androgens for extended periods, even though it's the fastest and surest means of progress. The more powerful mass-builders are also the most toxic, and orals like dianabol and Anadrol are notorious at impairing liver function and raising blood pressure levels when abused.

Defining abuse is relative, and some people are more tolerant to drugs than others. Boston Celtics draft pick Len Bias, for instance, died of a heart attack after snorting his first line of cocaine. Though steroids do not kill immediately, it doesn't mean they're not doing long-term internal damage. I encourage you to have regular check-ups and blood work performed both while on your cycles and off. Though you'll get great results from staying on high doses for longer periods, this too increases the degree of risk. Taking 75 mg of dianabol a day for 15 weeks is obviously going to do more potential damage than using 35 mg a day for six weeks.

In the end, we're all adults and responsible for our own health. Just keep in mind that it's highly unlikely you can use mega doses for years without eventually having some related health problem. You can also do yourself a favor by always including an anti-estrogen drug such as Clomid, Nolvadex, Arimidex, or even Biotest's M so that gyno isn't a major concern. And if you notice that certain drugs give you mysterious aches and pains or generally make you feel like shit, for God's sake try switching to a different compound.

Legally, it's a felony to possess steroids without a valid doctor's prescription. Though few steroid users ever get into any trouble with the law, it has happened and you need to be aware of it. You can drastically reduce your chances by being as discrete as possible about your use.

Many of us get our gear now through web sites based overseas, and this poses a unique set of risks. One is that you'll send your money and get nothing in return. You can usually avoid this by only using a source that people you know have used several times while proving to be reliable and trustworthy. Another possibility — if your package is being shipped from a foreign country into the USA — is that Customs or DEA officials will seize your drugs. You may lose out on the money, or in a worst-case scenario could be set up for an arrest while signing for it or picking it up from a P.O. Box.

I have no definitive solution to this problem, especially since the "gym dealers" who proliferated the Houses of Hardcore throughout the 80's and early 90's have mostly gone away. Those who continue in this profession tend to carry a high percentage of bogus steroids, and their price mark-ups are simply outrageous. For instance, on any number of online sources you can find 50 mg. tabs of Winstrol for one to two dollars. Gym dealers will often charge as much as three or four dollars for the same tab, and the odds are higher they're fake anyway.

If you do decide to go with an online source, try to find one that ships from within the USA, or at least a less suspicious country than Mexico or Thailand. Finally, if you're thinking of taking your physique to the max with steroids, realize it won't be cheap. Even without using any of the optional drugs like GH and while taking about a third of the year off from steroids, I still spend roughly three to six thousand dollars a year on my gear. To some of you, that amount may sound like a pittance while to others it may seem like a fortune. Even the cheapest cycles based on Mexican veterinary products will still run you a couple grand a year. So if you're going to do this, understand it doesn't come cheap.

Summary

Hopefully, I've given you some very useful information about using steroids to craft the best physique you're capable of. Always remember that even though steroids can certainly assist you in breaking past your natural genetic boundaries, they can't change your genetics. No amount of drugs, training, and food will make you look like Ronnie Coleman unless you were conceived of his daddy's super sperm and his mama's exceptional egg.

After a few cycles, you should start to get an idea about what your ultimate potential is. And if you're determined, disciplined, and patient, steroids will help you build your best physique in a few short years. If you want to have the most size, best shape, and leanest condition your body is capable of, steroids can be the way to get there.

