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Build Muscle & Lose Fat Easier by Manipulating Your Training Variables

By Mike Geary

Everyone will inadvertently hit a frustrating plateau in their training at one time or another. You're cruising along for a while, gaining strength, losing fat, looking better, and then all of the sudden it hits. Suddenly, you find yourself even weaker than before on your lifts, or you find that you've gained back a couple of pounds. It happens to everyone. Most of the time, these plateaus occur because people rarely change their training variables over time. Many people stick to the same types of exercises for the same basic sets and reps and rest periods with the same boring cardio routine. Well, I hope to open your mind and bring some creativity to your workouts with this article!

There are many ways that you can strategically modify your training variables to assure that you maximize your fat loss and/or muscle building response to exercise. Most people only think about changing their sets and reps performed, if they even think about changing their routine at all. However, other variables that can dramatically affect your results are changing the order of exercises (sequence), exercise grouping (super-setting, circuit training, tri-sets, etc.), exercise type (multi-joint or single joint, free-weight or machine based), the number of exercises per workout, the amount of resistance, the time under tension, the base of stability (standing, seated, on stability ball, one-legged, etc.), the volume of work (sets x reps x distance moved), rest periods between sets, repetition speed, range of motion, exercise angle (inclined, flat, declined, bent over, upright, etc), training duration per workout, and training frequency per week. Sounds like a lot of different training aspects to consider in order to obtain the best results from your workouts, doesn't it? Well, that's where a knowledgeable personal trainer can make sense of all of this for you to make sure that your training doesn't get stale. Below are a few examples to get your mind working to come up with more creative and result producing workouts.

Most people stick to workouts where they do something along the lines of 3 sets of 10-12 reps per exercise, with 2-3 minutes rest between sets. Boooooorrrrring! Here are a few examples of different methods to spice up your routine.

- Try 10 sets of 3, with only 20 seconds rest between sets.
- Try using a moderately heavy weight and complete 6 sets of 6 reps, doing a 3 minute treadmill sprint between each weight lifting set.

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- Try using a near maximum weight and do 10 sets of 1 rep, with 30 seconds rest between sets.
- Try using a lighter than normal weight and do 1 set of 50 reps for each exercise
- Try a workout based on only one full body exercise, such as barbell clean & presses or dumbbell squat & presses, and do nothing but that exercise for an intense 20 minutes. With this example, you could try sets of 5 reps at a moderately heavy weight every 2 minutes until you reach 20 minutes.
- Try a workout based on all bodyweight exercises such as pushups, pull-ups, chin-ups, dips, bodyweight squats, lunges, step-ups, etc.
- Try a circuit of 12 different exercises covering the entire body without any rest between exercises.
- Try that same 12 exercise circuit on your subsequent workout, but do the entire circuit in the reverse order.
- Try your usual exercises at a faster repetition speed on one workout and then at a super-slow speed on your next workout.
- Try completing five 30 minute workouts one week, followed by three 1-hr workouts the next week.
- Try doing drop sets of all of your exercises, where you drop the weight between each set and keep doing repetitions without any rest until complete muscular fatigue (usually about 5-6 sets in a row).

There are many more ways to continue to change your training variables. I hope this article gave you some ideas on methods for you to take your body to the next level. Keep in mind that no matter what style of training you are using at any given time, progression on subsequent workouts should be your goal. Work hard and train smart and watch your body change!

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5 Great Ways to Burn More Fat Today!

By **HSF Vitamins**

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"If you're trying to lose weight, give these 5 techniques a try. You'll melt off the pounds and feel great to boot."

1. Do not eat poor quality carbohydrates before bed. Poor quality carbohydrates are those that contain sugar or are highly processed. These would include most breakfast cereals, breads, snack foods, candies, and even fruits and juices. Eating these foods immediately prior to bedtime will likely result in increased fat deposit and will prevent your body from maintaining a successful fat-burning mode.
2. Increase your muscle mass! The more lean muscle you have, the more calories your body will burn even at rest. Muscle is extremely active metabolically. Do some resistance training, add some muscle, and crank up that metabolism.
3. Never let yourself get too hungry, or too stuffed. It really is all about moderation. Time your meals so that you eat before you are starving . . . doing this one simple thing will cause you to almost always eat less. When you do eat, stop when your satisfied not when you are so stuffed you cannot even get down another bite.
4. Double up on your cardio training. From time to time it may be beneficial to the fat-burning process for you to split your cardio training into two short sessions rather than one longer one. Studies suggest that people who do 30 minutes of morning cardio and then 30 minutes of evening cardio lose more fat than those doing just one 60 minute session.
5. Eat more high fiber foods. Most of us do not get enough fiber in our daily diets, and that's just a shame. Fiber not only promotes overall general health, but also can significantly aid in your fat-burning efforts. Leafy greens and salads are ideal sources of fiber.

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