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Mind over Muscle: Unleashing your Mind for Explosive Growth

By Tony DiCostanzo

If there is one thing that cripples bodybuilders, athletes and all health enthusiasts more than

anything else, it's their lack of respect for their own minds. We can all be guilty of losing focus or motivation from time to time. We all struggle with negative thoughts and images that tear us down or seek to rob us of our dreams and aspirations. The problem is that most of us accept and own those thoughts and so they become our reality. I will not in this short article get into all of the science behind conscious/subconscious mechanisms, instead simply try to open up your mind to the possibilities to what you can achieve if you take the time to shape your thoughts.

How many times have you embarked on a diet or workout plan only to find that you never reached the mark you set for yourself? You ate the chicken and broccoli for weeks and then all of sudden you're at the McDonalds and you hate yourself for it. You may have started out with all of the right intentions and still you embraced nothing but failure. You may have even begun with a strong sense of willpower. Nevertheless, in the end it really didn't matter because you never did what you said you would do. Well, here's why you may have failed? Success is not found in willpower.

If you believe that sheer willpower can endure an ongoing diet filled with foods that have no taste, then I applaud you. If you believe that willpower can take you through grueling workout after grueling workout for months on end as you pursue 3-4% body fat for an upcoming bodybuilding contest, then you are the exception to the rule. Most will find that willpower alone is not enduring and is only short-term. Your willpower requires conscious focus and energy if it is going to lead your actions on a daily basis. Unfortunately, you will eventually become drained and lose the focal point of your willpower. This happens because extraneous things tug at your heart, mind and life causing your emotions to lead you back to wherever you found comfort in the past. The result: another diet or workout bites the dust.

If willpower is not the answer, then what is? The answer is this: you must take greater control over your mind and not allow it to take control over you. I'm not talking about your conscious mind, but rather the subconscious. It has been said that the subconscious mind is like the "quarterback" of your life. Your conscious mind takes data and ideas and is the rational part of your thought process. It takes ideas and then it compares, determines and chooses what it believes is the best choice.

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However, the subconscious is the part of the mind that is responsible for storing data (loading memory), for habitual behavior (habits), and also for reflexive and autonomic functions such as breathing and circulation.

The subconscious does not have the ability to compare, reason or determine anything. It is solely deductive in nature and operates much like a computer. Moreover, just like your computer, it is there to serve you. What you put into it is what you will get out of it. But you must be active and aggressive with it. Hypnosis is one way of accessing the subconscious mind with positive affirmations and convictions. Another way to penetrate the subconscious is through repetition. Remember, everything that you see, hear, read or say repetitively is filtered through your subconscious which will then shape your habits. Now you can see why it's so hard to stay on a diet as you sit in front of the TV being bombarded by fast-food commercials. Next thing that you know you're in your car on the way to Burger King.

The key to victory is to take control over your thoughts and in particular, your subconscious mind. How can you shape the subconscious? Three things can be done immediately.

1. You must speak positive words into your heart and mind repetitively.

In other words, you must tell yourself over and over again that you can do what you want and that you will. You must tell yourself that you're doing these things because you want to and not because you have to. It must be continuous and throughout the course of an entire day and night. You must hear your voice speaking the words. For instance, "I want to eat what is healthy (speak specific foods). I like those foods. They taste good and make me feel strong and lean. I'm lean and ripped. My muscles are full and striated."

2. You must see what you want.

This is important and goes hand-in-hand with speaking the words into your heart and mind. You must see the body that you want. You must see yourself working out with power and strength. You must visualize yourself with the muscle you want. You must see the foods that will help you and see your desire to want to eat them--again, because you want to not because you have to.

I have practiced the two above principles with mind-motivational conditioning techniques on clients while in the midst of working out and the results have been astonishing. I have witnessed clients lift weights 40-50 lbs heavier than they were able to budge before the affirmations and meditations were practiced. This all took place in a matter of minutes. That shows you the power of the mind.

3. Change your surroundings and your habits will change.

One of the best ways to impact your subconscious is to surround yourself with things that will influence you towards your goals. Buy only the foods that support you. Watch and listen to things that are positive and empowering. Read, read, and read. Turn off the TV and read!

I can't articulate with words how incredible it is to engage in mind-motivational conditioning. Imagine

not having to diet because you don't want to eat what doesn't fit your regimen. It's that easy if you're willing to practice it.

Tony DiCostanzo is the founder of DreamBodies Body & Life Transformation System and a Certified Personal Fitness Trainer(NFPT). He has over 20 years of practical experience in the area of fitness as a competitive natural bodybuilder/boxer and martial artist. His holistic approach encompasses mind–motivational conditioning along with goal–oriented coaching.

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How Long Should You Rest Between Muscle Building Sessions?

By Rick Mitchell

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In an earlier article we concluded that muscles must be worked to failure if an adequate hypertrophic response is to occur. Whether this involves one or more sets is irrelevant as in either scenario the muscles must be worked to failure and beyond. This causes significant microscopic damage to the muscle tissues and it is during the period of recovery that protein synthesis undertakes the repair process that results in bigger muscle fibers.

But how long does this process take and when is it safe to expose those same muscles to further intensive exercise? Scientific studies suggest that muscle fiber degradation takes approximately five to seven days to repair and recover. Any further exposure of the affected muscle to intensive activity will interfere with the recovery process and actually prevent it from achieving maximum growth. However, using the muscle to assist in exercising other body parts or even taking part in low intensity aerobic exercise will not prevent recovery.

It follows therefore that each muscle group should be trained intensively only once each week in order to allow full recovery. This can be achieved by incorporating a split training regime that allows you to work out several times each week but still exercise each muscle group intensively only once every seven days.

Rick Mitchell is the creator of the bodybuildingadvisor.com website that provides guidance and information to athletes at all levels of bodybuilding experience. Go to

Bodybuilding Advice

to learn

more about the issues covered in this article.



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