ANABOLIC AFTER 40
MUSCLE SIZE MANUAL

Jonathan Lawson & Steve Holman
The Anabolic After-40 Muscle-Size Manual was written to help you achieve a muscular physique with sensible bodybuilding strategies. Weight training and dieting can be demanding activities, however, so it is highly recommended that you consult your physician and have a physical examination prior to beginning. Proceed with the suggested exercises and routines at your own risk.

Studio photography by Michael Neveux

Other photography by Steve Holman & Jonathan Lawson

Cover model: Jonathan Lawson (photo by Steve Holman)

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Like most teenagers who start bodybuilding, I wanted to be so big, ripped and freaky that jaws would drop when I walked on a beach. Whether you’re young or old, a muscular physique is a great way to get noticed and elevate self-esteem. I also had dreams of competing onstage in bodybuilding.

After I’d been lifting weights for a few years and had progressed to a respectable level of size and strength, that dream seemed to be a little closer, but many told me I needed “extra” help to get there. I didn’t listen. I refused to resort to bodybuilding drugs. They were out of the question for me (and still are in my 40s) because the rewards simply weren’t worth the risk. I decided to rely solely on training and nutrition.

At age 19 I entered my first contest and didn’t win. Then I competed again and did even worse. I knew I needed more muscle size if I wanted to make a strong showing, but I didn’t want to do it "artificially." I wanted to succeed without drugs.

It wasn’t easy to avoid steroids. The bodybuilders at my gym who used such drugs continued to tell me I couldn’t compete successfully without them. I tried not to listen, but their words echoed through my mind almost daily. Rather than give in to the temptation, however, I used their words to fuel my workout intensity and the conviction that I could do it drug-free.

While I did improve my physique, the real size I was seeking didn’t materialize no matter what I tried. I began to think that the drug users at the gym were right, that it was impossible to build exceptional size and strength without anabolic steroids.

Rather than risk my health and convictions, I let my training
gradually slack off and fall by the wayside. By the time I was 21, my bodyweight had leveled off at a soft 190 pounds at 5’11” (pic on the left below), and I began to refocus my priorities.

Then I got a job in the product division of *Iron Man* magazine and met Steve Holman, the editor in chief. He told me he had just developed a training program that could add pounds of muscle to just about anyone’s frame in a few months.

Talking to Steve motivated me to start training hard again, and here’s the real kicker: I then convinced him to train with me. When he agreed, I felt a wave of motivation unlike any I’d ever felt before. Steve had developed the Positions-of-Flexion muscle-building system, so I had a good feeling that he could help me take my muscle size and strength over the top.

The 10-Week Size Surge program worked like mass-building magic for me, packing on 20 pounds of muscle to my frame. Keep in mind that I was in my early 20s at that time and regaining some muscle I had previously. Still, the gains were amazing. Now it’s not a program I would recommend for me now in my 40s, which is why I’m writing this book. I will show you my training evolution and the best programs—from Size Surge in my 20s, to X-Reps in my 30s and now XRX in my 40s, all with a common size-building thread: Positions-of-Flexion. Let’s start with Size Surge...
CHAPTER 1
My 10-Week Size Surge Results

I was 21 years old when I took the Size Surge challenge—and it paid off big! As I mentioned, this is not a program for the older bodybuilder, but the program I currently use in my 40s is a version of it, as you'll see. Let's rewind more than two decades and review my results, which shocked even me:

Start
Bodyweight: 191 pounds
Bodyfat: 11 percent (according to AccuMeasure calipers)
Arms: 16 3/4 inches
Waist: 33 inches
Thighs: 25 1/2 inches
Squat: 205 x 8
Bench press: 200 x 10

10 Weeks later
Bodyweight: 209 pounds
Bodyfat: 10 percent (according to AccuMeasure calipers)
Arms: 18 inches
Waist: 32 inches
Thighs: 27 inches
Squat: 335 x 7
Bench press: 290 x 6

I added almost 20 pounds in 2 1/2 months. My bodypart measurements and strength increases also amazed me: arms, up 1 1/4 inches; thighs, up 1 1/2 inches; waist, down one inch; bench, up from 200 x 10 to 290 x 6; squat, up from 205 x 8 to 335 x 7. Unbelievable—and I did all that in 10 weeks with no steroids, just hard, sensible training, a regimented eating
schedule and a few choice supplements (see my diet and supplements in my 20 Pounds of Muscle ebook). Considering my sputtering progress in the past, these gains were miraculous.

Adding new muscle that quickly felt incredible. While I was not the ripped bodybuilder yet, it was a giant step in that direction, primarily thanks to Positions of Flexion training, which I'll explain in detail later. As I said, it's the common anabolic thread throughout my decades of training.

POF was the second five weeks, or Phase 2. The first five weeks, Phase 1, I used a basic-move strength-building routine. It's more of an anabolic primer designed to prepare every muscle for full-range POF, a true trigger of hyper-hypertrophy. Here are both programs:

### Phase 1: Monday

Five weeks; first week stop a rep or two short of failure on all work sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Poundage x Reps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Squats*, 2 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg extensions, 1 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-stiff-legged deadlifts*, 1 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg curls*, 1 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bench presses*, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flat-bench flyes, 1 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incline dumbbell presses, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chins or pulldowns*, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bent-over rows*, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dumbbell presses*, 2 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dumbbell upright rows, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg press or donkey calf raises, 2 x 12-18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Do one to two light warmup sets with about 50 percent of your work weight on the first and 80 percent on the second prior to your two work sets.
## Phase 1: Wednesday

Five weeks; first week stop a rep or two short of failure on all work sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Poundage x Reps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadlifts*, 2 x 7-9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing calf raises, 2 x 12-18</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbell curls*, 2 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Concentration curls, 2 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lying triceps extensions*, 2 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pushdowns or kickbacks, 2 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrist curls, 1 x 12-18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hammer curls, 1 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incline kneeups, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ab Bench crunch pulls, 2 x 7-9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Do one to two light warmup sets with about 50 percent of your work weight on the first and 80 percent on the second prior to your two work sets.

## Phase 1: Friday

Five weeks; first week stop a rep or two short of failure on all work sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Poundage x Reps</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Squats*, 2 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg extensions, 1 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg curls, 2 x 7-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated calf raises*, 2 x 12-18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench presses*, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flat-bench flyes, 1 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incline dumbbell presses, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chins or pulldowns*, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<td>Bent-over rows*, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dumbbell presses*, 2 x 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dumbbell upright rows, 2 x 7-9</td>
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</tbody>
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*Do one to two light warmup sets with about 50 percent of your work weight on the first and 80 percent on the second prior to your two work sets.
Phase 2

Five weeks; first week stop a rep or two short of failure on all work sets.

Workout 1

• **Quadriceps**
  - **Midrange:** Squats*, 2 x 7-9
  - **Stretch:** Sissy squats, 1 x 7-9
  - **Contracted:** Leg extensions, 2 x 7-9

• **Hamstrings**
  - **Midrange & Stretch:** Semi-stiff-legged deadlifts*, 1 x 7-9
  - **Contracted:** Leg curls, 2 x 7-9

• **Calves**
  - **Stretch:** Donkey calf raises, 2 x 12-18
  - **Contracted:** Standing calf raises, 2 x 12-18

• **Lower chest**
  - **Midrange:** Bench presses*, 2 x 7-9
  - **Stretch & Contracted:** Crossovers, 1 x 7-9

• **Upper chest**
  - **Midrange:** Incline dumbbell presses, 2 x 7-9
  - **Stretch & Contracted:** Incline cable flyes, 1 x 7-9

• **Triceps**
  - **Midrange:** Lying triceps extensions, 2 x 7-9
  - **Stretch:** Overhead extensions, 1 x 7-9
  - **Contracted:** Dumbbell kickbacks, 1 x 7-9

Workout 2

• **Lats**
  - **Midrange:** Pulldowns to the front*, 2 x 7-9
  - **Stretch & Contracted:** Machine pullovers, 2 x 7-9

• **Midback**
  - **Midrange:** Behind-the-neck pulldowns*, 2 x 7-9
  - **Stretch:** One-arm dumbbell rows, 1 x 7-9
  - **Contracted:** Bent-over bent-arm laterals, 2 x 7-9

• **Upper traps**
  - **Stretch & Contracted:** Forward-lean shrugs, 2 x 7-9

• **Deltoids**
  - **Midrange:** Dumbbell upright rows*, 2 x 7-9
  - **Stretch:** Incline one-arm laterals, 1 x 7-9
  - **Contracted:** Lateral raises, 2 x 7-9

• **Biceps**
  - **Midrange:** Dumbbell curls*, 2 x 7-9
  - **Stretch:** Incline dumbbell curls, 1 x 7-9
  - **Contracted:** Nonsupport concentration curls, 1 x 7-9

• **Abdominals**
  - **Midrange & Lower Contracted:** Incline kneeups, 1 x 7-9
  - **Stretch & Upper Contracted:** Ab Bench crunch pulls, 2 x 7-9

*Do one to two light warmup sets with 50 percent of your work weight on the first and 80 percent on the second prior to your two work sets.
It may not look like a lot at first glance—only a couple of sets per bodypart. But I can say from experience that it was brutal. Remember, all sets listed are to muscular failure, usually after a couple of lighter warmup sets. Those heavy work sets after the warmups take a toll, which is why I don't recommend this for over-40 bodybuilders.

Some could handle it, no doubt, but there's a much better, safer way to pack on muscle after 40, which I'll get to. And I will even plug it into a program very similar to the above so you can start stretching the sleeves of your T-shirts almost immediately—no ultra-heavy joint-jarring poundages necessary. The keys are total-fiber-type hypertrophy and Positions of Flexion.

Since you have a snapshot of POF in Phase 2 on the previous page, allow me to give you a brief explanation of this powerful mass-building protocol. POF has you do specific exercises, usually three, that train each muscle through its entire range of motion, or ROM, to trigger extraordinary fiber recruitment at every workout. That means faster, more complete muscle development from fewer sets.

Don’t misunderstand: Full-ROM training isn’t doing an exercise through its complete stroke, which is normally what you think when “full-range training” is mentioned; instead, it’s training each muscle with the right exercises, so that with one you hit the target from a full-stretch position, with another you blast the contracted position with continuous tension, and you also hit one position in between, usually with a compound, or multijoint, exercise, to get power-packed muscle synergy. In other words, POF allows you to work a muscle’s full arc of flexion—and build mass fast! You’ll feel it happening!
Interesting that almost three decades after Steve created POF, scientists are verifying how and why it works. In fact, respected researcher Brad Schoenfeld, Ph.D., recently identified his three key hypertrophy factors, and they coincidentally coincide with Positions-of-Flexion exercises...

1) **Mechanical tension** (with heavier training) = POF midrange moves: squats, bench presses, etc.

2) **Metabolic stress** (by blocking blood flow during sufficient tension time for cell swelling) = POF contracted moves: leg extensions, machine flyes, etc.

3) **Muscle damage** (via microtears in the fibers) = POF stretch moves: sissy squats, DB flyes, etc.

POF triceps training is a perfect example (I'll break out each muscle with POF in the next chapter):

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**POF triceps: close-grip bench presses, overhead extensions and pushdowns.**

- **Midrange = Mechanical Tension**
- **Stretch = Muscle Damage**
- **Contracted = Metabolic Stress**
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I was surprised, shocked actually, after putting POF to the test for the first time. It almost felt like my skin might tear because the influx of blood was so crazy. That excited me because I knew it was a direct result of extreme muscle fiber recruitment when a target muscle is trained thoroughly and completely. Full-range training produces an immediate size surge via a full-blown pump.

The target muscles get so much stimulation that there’s a massive blood flow to the area after only a few sets. It’s a condition bodybuilders strive for—and not just because Arnold compared it to an orgasm in “Pumping Iron.” The pump can be a signal that the muscle has been stressed enough to grow, it helps create an environment in which more of the muscle fibers can fire (occlusion research proves that) and it can also help stretch the fascia, the muscle-fiber encasements, that can restrict growth if they’re left to remain tight.

You saw the three triceps movements in the last chapter. Let’s look at POF biceps, one of Arnold’s favorite routines: barbell or dumbbell curls, incline dumbbell curls and concentration curls.

Arnold no doubt instinctively realized that those three exercises hit the target from three key positions/angles, for complete ROM (range of motion):
• **Biceps midrange:** upper arms slightly in front of the torso. Barbell, dumbbell or cable curls hit the midrange position and train the biceps with synergy from the front delts. When muscles work together, the overload and fiber activation are much greater in most cases.

• **Biceps stretch:** arms angled back behind the torso. Incline dumbbell curls hit the stretch position and activate the myotatic reflex due to extreme biceps elongation, which heightens muscle fiber stimulation. (More recent studies link stretch overload to hyperplasia, or fiber spitting, with one achieving a 300 percent increase in animal muscle tissue after only 30 days of stretch-induced stress!)

• **Biceps contracted:** arms up and away from the torso. Concentration curls hit the contracted position with resistance at the point of maximum contraction, but that contracted position is actually the target muscle’s weakest point. The real key to contracted-position effectiveness is continuous tension, no rest during the set, which blocks blood flow to the muscle. That occlusion is a powerful anabolic stimulus and also produces a potent anabolic jolt, especially after the heightened fiber activation created by the stretch-position movement.
Once you understand the full-range concept, you can see why POF works and why it creates a skin-stretching pump in only a few sets. You totally stimulate the muscle fibers by triggering the stretch reflex in a routine that trains each bodypart through its complete arc of flexion.

Muscle physiology dictates that full ROM and the myotatic reflex, along with occlusion and muscle synergy, can combine to ignite an extreme hypertrophic adaptation—or as Brad Schoenfeld, Ph.D, categorizes these: mechanical tension, muscle damage and metabolic stress.

Okay, let’s start from the top—or the middle, in this case—with the POF midrange position, where you get the most fiber involvement. I’ll also I.D. a midrange exercise for each major muscle.

**Midrange.** The first exercise in a standard POF approach is a midrange movement. The mass-building exercises, as they’re known, train the majority of the target-muscle fibers with heavy weight—giving them max-force overload—so it makes sense to give them priority most of the time. These core exercises are so powerful for good reason: Midrange movements involve muscle teamwork, which means that a number of muscle structures gang up to move the weight, with the target muscle as the prime mover, or leader of the pack. For example, the squat is a midrange exercise for the quads, and the glutes, hamstrings, lower back and even calves get in on the action to help the quads power up heavy iron for tremendous front-thigh overload.

You can see why these exercises are at the core of every POF routine—they build mass, plain and simple. Here’s a list of some of the best midrange movements for each bodypart:
Quads: squats
Hamstrings: feet-forward Smith-machine or hack squats
Calves: weight-bearing cardio (treadmill, hill setting), knee-extension (loose-form) leg presses
Lats: V-handle chins, parallel-grip chins or front pulldowns
Midback: trained with lat midrange or rows
Deltas: overhead presses (anterior/medial heads), upright rows (medial-head emphasis)
Chest: bench presses (decline is best) or wide-grip dips
Biceps: barbell/dumbbell curls or close-undergrip pulldowns or chins
Triceps: lying extensions or close-grip bench presses or elbows-flared pushdowns or dips
Abdominals: incline kneeups

Synergy, multiple muscles working together, allows you to ignite tremendous firepower because muscles work most efficiently as part of a team. It’s the way the body is designed to function in most cases. POF midrange movements all have synergy, and you can build impressive muscle size and strength in each bodypart just by using them alone; but you can get even better results when you follow your midrange exercises with movements that target the stretch and contracted positions.

Stretch. Stretch-position movements, the second exercise in standard POF protocol, are excellent at activating the myotatic reflex. Training the target bodypart at its maximal point of elongation—for example, incline curls for the biceps or overhead extensions for the triceps—can force an emergency response from the target muscle and bring new fibers into the action, ones the midrange movement may have missed—and that means a bigger, better growth response. Here’s how the phenomenon is defined in the book *Explosive Power*, published by Health For Life:
“The stretch reflex originates deep inside each muscle fiber with a structure called the muscle spindle. The muscle spindle is a complex construction of muscle protein, fluid and nervous system receptors. Within this structure is a special type of muscle fiber that does not have the contractile qualities normally associated with muscle. These special fibers, called intrafusal fibers, are wrapped with nerve cells that relay information from muscle to the central nervous system. When a muscle is stretched quickly, the tension in the intrafusal fibers stimulates these nerve cells, sending messages out to the central nervous system at great speed. In response, the central nervous system triggers a muscle reflex that generates a fast and powerful contraction. This myotatic, or stretch, reflex is a protective mechanism that provides an extra burst of strength to resist force encountered suddenly. **When the reflex is triggered, a very large proportion of the muscle’s fibers suddenly contract.**”

When you use a stretch-position exercise, such as flyes for the chest or pullovers for the lats, the target muscle reacts with an emergency response, which can cause more muscle fibers to fire. The reason an emergency reaction occurs is that you’re training the muscle in a somewhat vulnerable position—at a point of full elongation.

By activating more fast-twitch fibers in the target muscle, you stimulate faster development. Stretch-position exercises are also believed to trigger more anabolic hormone release, such as IGF-1 and more force production, but not as much as midrange exercises in most cases. And don’t forget about the possibility of fiber splitting; Jose Antonio, Ph.D., et al., did a study that produced a **300 percent muscle-size increase in bird-wing muscle** from only progressive-stretch overload.
Amazing! Here’s a list of powerful stretch-position exercises for each muscle group:

**Quads:** sissy squats

**Hamstrings:** semi-stiff-legged deadlifts (a.k.a. Romanian deadlifts) or flat-back hyperextensions

**Calves:** donkey calf raises or leg-press calf raises

**Abs:** cable crunches with low-back support or end-of-bench crunches

**Chest:** dumbbell flyes

**Lats:** barbell or dumbbell pullovers

**Midback:** close-grip cable rows or one-arm dumbbell rows or chest-supported DB rows

**Deltas:** incline one-arm laterals or one-arm cable laterals

**Biceps:** incline curls

**Triceps:** overhead extensions or cable pushouts (in a forward-lunge position, pictured below)

You’ll really feel these exercises in the target muscle, especially when you do them after a big midrange movement. The pump

![The cable pushout is a more elbow-friendly triceps stretch move than overhead extensions for many trainees.](image-url)
and burn will be unreal—and in some cases almost unbearable. What's interesting is that the latest research shows that even moderate-load stretching produces muscle growth.

In the 2017 study “Stretch Training Induces Unequal Adaptation in Muscle Fascicles and Thickness,” researchers found that, “Stretch training is a viable modality to alter muscle architecture… decreasing pennation angles and increasing muscle thickness.” [Scand J Med Sci Sports, 2017, Jan 30: Epub ahead of print]

What the heck does that mean? According to researcher Schoenfeld....
“At least some of the growth was due to the addition of sarcomeres in series—as opposed to in parallel growth, which is predominant in traditional training protocols.”

In other words, stretching and stretch-position exercises can trigger significant new muscle mass on a whole new level. Exciting stuff!

To finish off the target muscle and complete the full-range ROM chain, you follow the stretch-position exercise with a contracted-position movement for that final growth jolt (although keep in mind that in some POF programs you don’t work all positions at every workout; in fact, you’ll see that as we’ve gotten older, Steve and I have both opted for training only one position for each muscle at every workout. More on that in a later chapter).

**Contracted.** The last exercise in a standard POF bodypart routine is the contracted-position movement, which trains the target muscle group at the point of complete contraction with resistance and continuous tension—for example, leg extensions for the front thighs after squats (midrange) and sissy squats (stretch).

An exercise with resistance in the completely contracted position really finishes off a target muscle after as many fibers as possible have been activated with the midrange- and stretch-position movements. Most bodybuilders instinctively crave a final squeeze on a pumped muscle to finish it off, and contracted-position exercises provide that—but they do much more....

The continuous tension also maxes out the pump for that skin-as-tight-as-a-drum feeling. That excessive fullness is due
to occlusion, which creates a bodypart bloodbath immediately after the set. That’s because continuous tension blocks blood from flowing into the muscle until the set is done. Here’s a list of contracted-position exercises for each muscle group:

**Quads:** leg extensions  
**Hamstrings:** leg curls  
**Calves:** standing calf raises  
**Abs:** crunches  
**Chest:** cable flyes, cable crossovers or machine flyes  
**Lats:** stiff-arm pulldowns or machine pullovers  
**Midback:** bent-arm bent-over laterals  
**Upper midback (upper traps):** shrugs  
**Deltas:** lateral raises  
**Biceps:** concentration curls  
**Triceps:** pushdowns or kickbacks

Bent-arm bent-over lateral raises = midback contraction
So the underlying concepts of POF are simple: If you hit a muscle from three specific angles that cover the full range of motion of that muscle, you stimulate more fibers to grow and create a number of anabolic cascades in the body. POF is efficient, effective mass training!

Remember, the key point is that the angles you cover with your chosen exercises should complement one another so together they complete the full-ROM chain. Using triceps as an example, decline close-grip bench presses (midrange), overhead extensions (stretch) and kickbacks (contracted).

Each position can involve different fibers and different recruitment patterns, producing full, extreme development quickly. Exciting stuff, especially to the hardgaining ectomorphic bodybuilder with genetics more like Steve's than mine (see his before and after photos below).
Here’s a quote from *Designing Resistance Training Programs* by Steven J. Fleck, Ph.D., and William J. Kraemer, Ph.D., two of the most respected researchers in the strength-training field, that corroborates this multi-angular mass-building approach:

“If the body position is changed, the order of recruitment can also change (Grimby and Hannerz 1977). The order of recruitment can also change for multifunctional muscles from one movement or exercise to another. Recruitment order in the quadriceps for the performance of a knee extension is different from that for a squat. The variation in recruitment order provides some evidence to support the belief that **to completely develop a particular muscle it must be exercised with several different movements or exercises.**”

Advanced bodybuilders do more than one exercise per bodypart for that very reason—to develop as many fibers as possible to extraordinary levels. Keep in mind, however, that a lot of advanced bodybuilders use the shotgun approach when it comes to multi-angular training, with no rhyme or reason to their exercise selection, which can lead to overlap, wasted effort and overtraining if you don’t have pharmaceutical help (that’s the reason so many use steroids—to recover and grow
from the excessive training they think they need to “cover all the angles”).

Full-range-of-motion POF works because it produces complete target-muscle stimulation with the minimal amount of work. If you’re still not convinced multi-angular training is necessary, consider the following quote from Jaci Van Heest, renowned exercise physiologist at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado:

“Muscles contract when tiny levers on myosin, a muscle protein, fit into grooves on actin, another protein, and push it forward exactly like a ratchet wrench. But myosin can latch onto actin in any of several positions, not all of them ideal. Only when the myosin heads are in the right register can the muscle have the optimal tension. But optimizing every actin-myosin pairing is less an achievable goal than a Platonic ideal.” (Newsweek, July 22, 1996: “How High? How Fast?”)

You need more than one exercise to optimize as many actin-myosin pairings in the target muscle as possible. A midrange-, stretch- and contracted-position exercise for each muscle gets you there, triggering extraordinary muscle growth.
After years of growing with standard Positions of Flexion and its variations—changing exercise order, etc.—I needed something to take my physique to the next level.

After doing some research and gym experimentation, Steve and I discovered something that did just that—a relatively simple concept we call "X Reps" because it extends a set with pulsating, piston-like partials in the target muscle’s semi-stretch range of the stroke.

It works so well at triggering new mass because of a few things science reveals: First, every time you hit failure on an exercise, it’s your nervous system that balks, not the muscle. You can do set after set to try to get around or over that roadblock, but with each set, your nervous system stops you early, and there are many muscle fibers left understimulated and completely unused.

The X-Rep technique, which you’ll soon learn about, is one way around that roadblock. It allows you to leapfrog nervous system failure, significantly improve the anabolic stimulation of any set and grow at an astounding rate.
So to repeat, every set you do, even if you push it as hard as you can, lacks max hypertrophic punch because of nervous system failure. It’s the very reason bodybuilders do set after set and get only small increases in muscle. It has to do with what’s known as the Size Principle for recruitment of motor neurons, which goes something like this...

In a standard set, the type 1 slow-twitch fibers are recruited first, and the faster-growing type 2 fibers last. That's why so many bodybuilders consider the last few reps of a set critical; however, usually your nervous system shuts down before much anabolic stimulation of those fast-growing fast-twitch fibers occurs.

We came to the conclusion about nervous system failure after looking at the scientific evidence presented by Steven J. Fleck, Ph.D., and William J. Kraemer, Ph.D., in their book Designing Resistance Training Programs. They discuss a study by Dudley and Harris done in 1992 that demonstrated the activation of knee extensors by the central nervous system during maximal efforts. One of their conclusions was that the CNS “limits force by engaging inhibitory mechanisms that are protective in nature.”

Fleck and Kraemer say that inhibitory mechanisms appear to be especially active when large amounts of force are developed, such as maximal force development at slow speeds of movement. That’s precisely what happens toward the end of a set of eight to 12 reps to failure—and even more so with lower-rep sets.

They cite studies by Caiozzo, Perrine and Edgerton 1981; Dudley et al. 1990; and Wickiewicz et al. 1984 when they conclude that “neural protective mechanisms appear to have their greatest effect in slow-velocity, high-resistance movements.” Once again, that describes the reps at the end of a set to failure perfectly.
So it's the inhibitory mechanisms of the CNS that stop each and every set to failure—it's the reason you can no longer do a full-range rep.

The solution is X Reps, partial pulses that allow you to override nervous system failure and make each set much more effective than conventional sets at stimulating those highly anabolic fast-twitch fibers. That's because X Reps, or extended repetitions, extend the tension time on those key fibers in the optimal position of an exercise at the end of a set for a dramatic anabolic surge—the fast-growing fibers keep firing.

What is the "optimal position" for max-fiber recruitment? The semi-stretch range along the exercise's stroke. For example, when you can’t get another rep on incline presses, you lower the bar to a point a few inches off your chest and do eight-inch partial reps in that position, between the low and midpoint of the stroke to extend the tension time on the pecs’ fast-twitch fibers.

Those three to six pulsing partials can drastically reduce your time in the gym and provide some of the best raw muscle gains of your life.
But isn’t the peak contracted position, like the top of a leg extension, where the most muscle fibers fire? Not according to the research. Fleck and Kraemer state the contracted-position is the worst place for muscle fibers to generate their maximum force because the fibers are very bunched up, so much so that they can’t produce as much tension as when the muscle is in a more lengthened state. Since mechanical tension/force is one of the three key hypertrophic triggers, that means X-Rep partials will produce best results when the muscle is slightly stretched, such as near the bottom of a chinup or near the top of a pulldown. Some observations back up that belief:

1) Many trainees have trouble building calf size. Notice that the majority rarely use a full range of motion, choosing instead to bounce near the top position rather than allowing their heels to move down past the footplate. Could it be that their calf problems are partly due to the fact that they miss training the muscle when it’s near full elongation, or stretch?

Larry Scott, the first Mr. Olympia, said that he remembers changing gyms and using a different apparatus for donkey calf raises, an exercise where you bend at the waist, rest your forearms on a high bench or table and someone sits on your hips so you can do calf raises on a high calf block (see photo above). He began losing size in his lower legs, until he realized that the reason was due to the placement of his upper body on the new setup.
The angle of his torso was above 90 degrees to his legs—he wasn’t bent over enough—which lessened the stretch on his calves. Once he positioned his torso at a 90-degree angle to his legs and performed a full-range movement, his hamstrings pulled his calves into a more stretched position, and his calves started growing again.

2) When Steve was in the early stages of developing Positions-of-Flexion training, he noticed that trainees made quantum leaps in mass when they incorporated a stretch-position exercise for each bodypart—incline curls for biceps, overhead extensions for triceps, stiff-legged deadlifts for hamstrings and so on. Was the reason for the new surge in growth due to the target muscle getting work near full elongation? The most likely answer is yes, and it’s also the reason that donkey calf raises and leg press calf raises are considered the best calf exercises—because the movement, if performed correctly through a full range, forces the gastrocnemius muscles into optimal stretch due to the angle of the trainee’s torso, which should be at 90 degrees to the legs, to trigger a severe pull on the calf muscles.
The Anabolic After-40 Muscle-Size Manual

3) Arthur Jones, creator of Nautilus machines, suggested that to get best results with one-set-to-failure training, the trainee should go to failure on an exercise and then pull or push up as high as possible and hold for a few seconds—that is, perform an isometric hold at a point along the range where the target muscle is somewhat elongated. For example, on leg curls the hold would occur about a third up from the bottom, the sticking point and a spot where the hamstrings are somewhat stretched. Most trainees never perform that isometric hold. That’s too bad because it may be a key to making high-intensity training much more effective. (Just doing that can trigger new mass gains from your workout—exciting stuff!)

And we believe that using partial pulses, or X Reps, instead of a hold in that position can make any exercise significantly more effective from a growth standpoint. Why? We've seen it happen—but also because of a statement gathered by researcher Robert Thoburn from Dr. Phillip Gardiner of the University of Manitoba:

“The nervous system is tuned to the performance of tasks, not just generation of force, so it can be easier to get complete recruitment of muscles if something moves.”

Partial-rep pulses offer significantly better gains than just holding
the weight statically, especially after a set of dynamic full-range contractions. They simply force more fast-twitch fiber recruitment due to movement. It’s a better way of leapfrogging nervous system failure, the reason you stop an all-out conventional set—it’s your nervous system that craps out, not the muscle.

X Reps force the nervous system to keep firing the muscle fibers with the most growth potential at the critical point in an exercise’s stroke so you get three to five times the anabolic stimulation compared to what you get with conventional sets. That’s mass-building dynamite!

So why not do only X Reps and forget the preliminary conventional reps? X Reps are most effective at the end of a regular set as opposed to by themselves as partials-only sets because of the way muscle fiber activation occurs. It has to do with the aforementioned size principle of muscle fiber recruitment—it’s like a domino effect in which the low-threshold motor units fire first followed by the intermediates followed by the high-threshold motor units—so you develop as many fiber types as possible for maximum muscle size.

Fastest gains in mass depend on developing all fiber types to their maximum! That’s the reason one-rep maxes don’t do a lot for building size for most people—they emphasize only fast-twitch fibers, not to mention the nervous system craps out almost immediately.

To build a muscle to the extreme, you have to train and build all fiber types—slow, intermediate and fast. POF plus X Reps make that happen.
The full X-Rep workouts Steve and I used appear in our first ebook **The Ultimate Mass Workout**. I'm not including it here because I'm focused on over-40 trainees, and that program would be too much for most older guys.

In fact, I made much better gains on it than Steve did, who was close to 40 when we used it. Steve burned out on it quickly—it was a three-way split training five days a week.

So while that style of training worked in my 30s like a charm. As I got closer to my 40s, I knew that the heavy weights plus X Reps on every exercise would do more harm than good.

In fact, just doing full POF, usually three exercises per muscle, was too much. I needed more of a split-positions approach and a method that would allow me to continue packing on muscle without bone-crushing, joint-jarring poundages.

Steve had been feeling the same way for a while, and he began going back to old school moderate-poundage "density" methods—settling on 4x10—four sets of 10 reps with short rests between.

We called it 4X, using the same weight on all four sets with only the fourth—or sometimes the third and the fourth—to failure. We used a weight that we could get 15 reps with, but only did 10; rest 35 seconds, and then do it again—and so on for four sets. On the fourth set we went to failure—and if we got more than 10, we increased the weight at the next workout.

That is one of the best ways to train if you're over 40—but recently we tweaked it to a method we call STX, or slow-twitch exhaustion. It’s based on current research out of Brazil—and it works big time!
Slow-Twitch X-haustion is a mass method that Steve and I explained in detail in the Anabolic Reload ebook, so I will just summarize here (I highly recommend you go to Steve's read-me page for more here).

STX is based on a Brazilian study that showed doing a high-rep set first, before your heavier sets, and with only a short rest, triggered significantly more hypertrophy.

That’s because the preliminary high-rep set pre-exhausted the endurance slow-twitch fibers, activating more fast-twitch high-growth fibers during the heavy-set action more quickly and thoroughly—more mass faster.

Interesting that the first high-rep set did the same job as the first few lower-intensity 10-rep sets in 4X—pre-exhausted the slow-twitch fibers, which primes the fast-twitch growth fibers to fire with a vengeance on the last set or two. That’s good news for me because I do not like high-rep sets.

In addition, the high-rep set produced growth in the slow-twitch fibers for another layer of mass, something many bodybuilders neglect. Jerry Brainum, a trusted bodybuilding authority for more than 40 years, said:
"Emerging evidence shows that the muscle fibers most affected when training with lighter loads and higher reps are the type-1 muscle fibers. These fibers are often referred to as 'endurance fibers,' since they are slower to fatigue compared to the type-2 muscle fibers. In the past, it was thought that most muscular growth resulted from a hypertrophy of type-2 muscle fibers. While this is still true, it's now known that type-1 fibers are also capable of showing a significant level of muscular hypertrophy."

The high-rep set also produces a higher lactic acid component—the burn—for anabolic hormone release.

Luckily you also get that burn and slow-twitch hypertrophy from the first few lower-intensity sets with 4X—as long as you keep the rest between those sets short, about 30 seconds.

Why am I singing the praises of 4X so hard? Because, as I said, I'm not a fan of high reps. Yes, I will use the high-rep STX method every so often, but I can't stand it for more than a week or two. Instead I use 4X with my own variation, something I call XRX. That stands for X-Rep X-celeration. Here's the drill...

**Use your 15RM weight** (one you could get 15 reps with)...  
**Set 1:** 10 reps (fairly easy)  
   *Rest 30 seconds*  
**Set 2:** 10 reps (getting hard)  
   *Rest 30 seconds*  
**Set 3:** 8-10 reps, max out to failure (hard)*  
   *Rest 10 seconds*  
**R/P XRX Add-on:** Fast, piston-like X-Rep partials

*If you get 10 reps on set 3, use a slightly heavier weight at your next workout for the exercise.

Set 1 emphasizes slow-twitch fibers; Set 2 begins by firing
mostly slow-twitch, with fast-twitch getting primed toward the end; Set 3 emphasizes fast-twitch as you go to muscular failure. Then you blast past the growth threshold with XRX...

The 10-second rest gives the fast-twitch fibers a slight breather before you hammer them again with X-Rep X-celeration—that's moving the weight as quickly as you can while staying in control, through the bottom third of the stroke—X-Rep partials.

If you can't manage any X Reps, just do a static hold for as long as you can. On some exercises, the static hold may be the best option. And on stretch-position day, it's all you will use, as those exercises are the most dangerous. In other words, when you do stretch-position exercises, do not do fast X Reps; instead add a static hold to your last set at or near the stretch point—no rest/pause.

Keep in mind that the add-on, be it X Reps after a rest/pause or a static hold tacked on to the last set, is very important, a key to building the most freaky muscle size quickly. Studies show that the quick shift at the turnaround, where you move from the negative to the positive stroke, helps activate more growth fibers, even dormant ones. We're talking a hyper-hypertrophy trigger. Just don't bounce or throw the weight—stay in complete control of the weight at all times.
As Olympic coach and muscle-building expert Charles Poliquin says, one of the least-used hypertrophic stimulators is changing rep tempo—and he’s absolutely right. While you should use the 1/3 cadence most of the time, lifting in one second and lower in three, other tempos can spur new anabolic reactions quickly—as you’ll see when you try it.

What about the Anabolic After-40 split? Do you do the above with all three POF exercises for every muscle when you train it?

Sounds like a lot—and it is, too much for older trainees for sure. Steve and I both discovered that hitting one position at each workout while training the muscles three times a week is a much more effective mass-building protocol, one of the best for the past-40 bodybuilder looking for muscle mass fast.

So now I do one exercise per muscle with XRX—or STX for a week or two if I’m feeling the need for high reps. My “Pure-Positions” weekly workouts are as follows:

**Monday:** All Contracted

**Wednesday:** All Midrange

**Friday:** All Stretch

Note that stretch-position movements provide the most muscle damage, so you get two full rest days after, Saturday and Sunday, before you train all muscle groups again. Also, to repeat: the stretch moves are the most dangerous, so no XRX; instead, add a static hold or short pulses near the stretch for as long as possible at the end of the last set.

Also notice that the Wednesday midrange workout, which includes all big exercises like bench presses, pulldowns, rows,
etc., does not contain any direct arm work. Why? Because the big compound moves give your arms plenty of growth stimulation—bench presses hit triceps, rows hit biceps, etc.

Even so, I like to add some semi-direct arm work, with a superset or two of dumbbell pullovers and hammer curls. Pullovers train the triceps long head for massive sweep and hammers hit the brachialis as well as biceps for sky-high peak.

In case you're concerned about three full-body workouts per week being too "old school" compared to the current trend of training each muscle only once a week, there's new-school research that says otherwise.

Brad Schoenfeld, Ph.D., conducted a study that compared a workout program that trained each target muscle once a week and the less popular full-body workout performed on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The trainees were doing the SAME VOLUME of work for each muscle...

In other words, if the once-a-week-per-muscle group did 12 sets for chest, the three-times-per-week group did 4 sets for chest at each workout—still 12 total sets but over three workouts instead of all at one. After 12 weeks...

The group that trained each target muscle three times a week (full-body, more frequency) got better muscle gains than the group that trained each muscle only once a week.

Okay, it's time for the workout. If you apply the principles right, eat properly and get enough rest, you should grow like never before (in the next chapter you'll see how a legendary pro bodybuilder applied this "density" training method to become one of the most massive short competitors of all time)...

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The Anabolic After-40 Muscle-Size Manual
# Anabolic After-40 XRX Program

## WORKOUT 1

**Monday: CONTRACTED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise, sets x reps</th>
<th>Poundage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quads</strong>&lt;br&gt;Leg extensions, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Calves</strong>&lt;br&gt;Standing calf raises,&lt;br&gt;2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hamstrings</strong>&lt;br&gt;Leg curls, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chest</strong>&lt;br&gt;Machine flyes, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lats</strong>&lt;br&gt;Stiff-arm pulldowns,&lt;br&gt;2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midback (upper)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Shrugs, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midback (middle)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bent-arm bent-over laterals,&lt;br&gt;2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dels</strong>&lt;br&gt;Seated laterals, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Triceps</strong>&lt;br&gt;V-bar pushdowns, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Biceps</strong>&lt;br&gt;Concentration curls,&lt;br&gt;2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Abdominals</strong>&lt;br&gt;Crunches, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Use your 15-rep max weight: Set 1, 10 reps, rest 35 secs.; Set 2, 10 reps, rest 35 secs.; Set 3, max reps; rest 10 seconds, then do speed X Reps, fast piston-like partials through the semi-stretch positions, the bottom third of the stroke. If you get 10 on your third set of the 3X sequence, use a heavier weight at your next workout.*
## Anabolic After-40 XRX Program

### WORKOUT 2

**Wednesday: MIDRANGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise, sets x reps</th>
<th>Poundage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quads</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Squats, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 3 (no XRX)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Calves</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated calf raises, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hamstrings/glutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperextensions, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chest</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bench presses, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midback</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chest-supported DB rows,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lats</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulldowns, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dels</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DB Presses, 2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Arms superset</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DB pullovers, 3x10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hammer curls, 3x10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Abdominals</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bench knee pull-ins,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incline knee ups,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2x10, 1xMax + R/P 7 XRX</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Use your 15-rep max weight: Set 1, 10 reps, rest 35 secs.; Set 2, 10 reps, rest 35 secs.; Set 3, max reps; rest 10 seconds, then do speed X Reps, fast piston-like partials through the semi-stretch positions, the bottom third of the stroke. If you get 10 on your third set of the 3X sequence, use a heavier weight at your next workout.*
**Anabolic After-40 XRX Program**

**WORKOUT 3**

**Friday: STRETCH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise, sets x reps</th>
<th>Poundage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quads</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sissy squats, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Calves</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg press calf raises, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hamstrings/glutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-stiff-legged deadlifts, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chest</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Flat flyes, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lats</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pullovers, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midback</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Close, parallel-grip cable rows, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dels</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>One-arm cable laterals, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Triceps</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DB incline extensions, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Biceps</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incline curls, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Abdominals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-range crunches, 2x10, 1xMax + StatX</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Use your 15-rep max weight: Set 1, 10 reps, rest 35 secs.; Set 2, 10 reps, rest 35 secs.; Set 3, max reps; when you can't get another full rep, hold in the stretch position for as long as possible. Slight pulses are acceptable in the stretch. If you get 10 or more on set 3, use a heavier weight at your next workout.*
Anabolic After-40 XRX Workout
Tips and Reminders

1) Rep tempo. Lift in 1 second, lower in 3 on all reps in the 3X sequence. This "power cadence," 1/3, produced the most mass in a comprehensive 2009 hypertrophy study: *Int J Sports Med.* 30(3):200-204. The slow lowering produces more muscle damage in the target muscle, while the more explosive positive activates more growth fibers due to the myotatic reflex.

2) Warmups. Warmup sets are not required. The first two lower-intensity sets for each exercise act as a specific warmup as well as pre-exhausting slow-twitch fibers and triggering anabolic hormone release via lactic acid accumulation.

3) Rest. On 3X sequences, rest 30 to 40 seconds between sets. After set 3, rest 10 seconds, then do controlled acceleration partial reps, X-Rep X-celeration, from near the bottom, or turnaround, of the stroke to the halfway point. Move as fast as possible while staying in control—no throwing or heaving the weight. (XRX is not possible on free-bar squats.) No XRX on stretch day; instead, when you hit failure on set 3, lower to near full stretch and pulse-hold for as long as possible.

4) Progression. When you can get 10 reps on all sets in a 3X sequence, increase the weight slightly at your next workout for that exercise—so reps go something like 10, 10, 8 or 10, 9, 7.

5) Duration. You can use this program for four to six weeks. After that, you could stick with it but switch to the high-rep-set-first STX method on all exercises (see the Pure Positions STX Workout in the *Freak-Physique Stretch Overload* ebook). Or try Steve's over-40 STX workout in *Anabolic Reload*.

Note: For one-arm or one-leg exercises use no rest—do a set for one side, then hit the other for a set then back again. That keeps the rest for each side at 30 to 40 seconds.
Anabolic XRX
The X-Rep X-celeration Method

**Step 1:** After your last regular full-range (dynamic) set to positive failure, which should occur around rep nine on most exercises, rest 10 seconds.

**Step 2:** With the same weight start with the bar, machine lever arm, dumbbells or foot plate in the semi-stretch position, which is just above the lowest stretch point, and drive to just before the midpoint of the stroke as quickly as possible while staying in control of the weight.

**Step 3:** Do four to six up-and-down pulses through that X-Rep stroke. Those piston-like partials should be in a range of six to 10 inches, depending on the exercise. You should feel the target muscle screaming for relief, which indicates massive fiber activation and extreme growth stimulation.

**Step 4:** Terminate the set when you can no longer do accelerated pulses with the resistance. Take a few deep breaths, stretch and contract the target muscle and feel the blood rushing in. You’ve triggered some kick-ass hyper hypertrophy.
I began this book explaining the mass-training discoveries, methods and workouts that have evolved in my muscle-building arsenal over the years with Steve's guidance. But I'd like to rewind a bit to where 3X and 4X came from—and discuss a legendary trainer and then a pro bodybuilder who used it.

More than 15 years ago one of the most famous Hollywood trainers of the '60s, '70s and '80s would come into the *Iron Man* offices where we worked. This true trainer of champions and movie stars had closed his celebrated gym in Studio City, California, gone into semi-retirement in his 80s and made it a point every so often to drop by *IM* and regale Steve and I with stories, exercise techniques, assorted expletives and his methods that he'd honed in his gym over the decades—which he said was the only right way to produce the fastest muscle results possible.

His tirades—did we mention he was usually on the edge of berserk?—made some sense, but Steve, being somewhat of a workout authority as *Iron Man*'s editor in chief, never really took the man's so-called "density" method too seriously—lighter weights, short rests between sets. It didn't add up—it just wasn't heavy enough or *intense* enough—or so we thought.
As fate would have it, the legendary trainer passed away, and his wife asked if she could store much of his belongings at the IM warehouse. John Balik, IM publisher at the time and a former gym employee of the trainer back in the late ’60s, okayed it.

In came furniture, crates of trophies the trainer had won, pictures that hung in his legendary Vince's Gym and boxes of dusty documents, booklets and log books. Yes, buried in all of this stuff were the exact workouts and methods he had used to get those incredible results he always talked about.

Unfortunately, while the training guru was alive we never tried his moderate-weight, high-fatigue method—that's because we "knew" real results were all about pushing more weight (we were dead wrong). And we had the "war injuries"—chronic aches and pains—to prove it, including bum shoulders, tweaked knees and backs that would go out for no reason, even bending over to pick up a fork. Funny that the old-school trainer had none of those problems, even in his 80s. All of that got us thinking—finally....
We began pouring over the documents outlining the trainer's muscle-building methods he used on Hollywood actors and star bodybuilders alike, including the very first Mr. Olympia Larry Scott. A light bulb went off in Steve's head, as he realized that the current science, which included triggering fat-burning and muscle-building hormones via muscular fatigue, verified the trainer's methods.

Maybe the old Iron Guru was freaking right! So we began to experiment in the gym with some of what was in his programs, revising the methods along the way. Then we'd do more research, filling in the gaps with recent scientific findings.

The eventual results were incredible! The pieces fell into place, and we realized exactly how and why our slightly revised version of the trainer's methods worked so quickly—it hit the muscles completely with cumulative stress to reach the growth threshold, triggered size increases in ALL fiber types, and it produced a hormonal cascade that packed on muscle and burned fat like a blowtorch—without overtraining or joint stress.

Our results were some of the best we'd ever had—staying leaner and getting more muscular with much shorter, less stressful workouts. We started writing about it in Iron Man and
released an e-book about it, *The 4X Mass Workout*. Our new growth spurt with the method was not a fluke. Others began to use it with plateau-smashing success, including Mr. America Doug Brignole, now almost 60, who shaped it into his own method, a higher-rep strategy we call Super-TORQ (an interview with Doug on his method, along with his workout, is in the *Power/Density* ebook).

We got reports of stunning progress—all with no joint stress—in fact, any residual joint pain disappeared. And workouts usually lasted less than an hour. (The legendary gruff trainer insisted those short workouts were necessary so key anabolic hormones stayed at full-throttle and the metabolism would burn white hot—all so important for older bodybuilders, as we learned later.)

We've now refined 4X into the high-rep-first STX (Slow-Twitch X-haustion, Steve's favorite) and XRX (X-Rep X-celeration, my after-40 training choice). Our metabolisms are stoked 24/7 and joint aches and pains are now fading memories—and we're staying leaner all year long. Our only regret is that we didn't discover the system sooner, due to ego and stubbornness; but now we can pass it on to you.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Vince Gironda, that cranky, quirky trainer to the stars and the first Mr. Olympia Larry Scott,
because his methods were the spark that may have saved us from giving up on weight training later in life—or becoming orthopedic nightmares. Density training is your key to fast, huge muscle-building success without joint stress as you age.

Yes, there is absolutely another way other than pounding your body with joint-crushing weights—it’s the Size Principle of Muscle Fiber Recruitment and the slow-twitch exhaustion methods we’ve discussed.

That’s precisely how legendary bodybuilder Danny Padilla built mass. He was known for his classic, no-flaws physique—at only 5'2", and his nickname was "the Giant Killer" because his perfect mass-symmetry combo allowed him to beat bodybuilders who were much taller and larger than he was.

The method that helped him place in the top five of many pro contests back in the '80s was 5 sets of 12—same weight on every set, with short rests between sets—about 45 seconds. When he was able to do 12 on all five sets, he would up the weight a bit. The first sets were fairly easy; the last few were brutally hard, activating the high-growth fast-twitch fibers...
So the first few sets were exhausting primarily slow-twitch fibers—and getting them to grow. The last two or three sets were very difficult and had him activating primarily fast-twitch growth fibers. A very efficient way to train—a double-barreled growth effect—extreme hypertrophy in multiple fiber types.

We refined Danny's training method to four sets per exercise and less overall volume, as he was on "special supplements" during his competition phase, we were not. Plus, now we're older. The point is we embraced moderate poundages and short rests between sets for some of the best gains of our lives.

The bottom line, and best news for over-40 trainees who want to build ultimate muscle size is that you don't have to use joint-crushing poundages—the weights for 4x10, 4x12 or 5x12 are moderate due to the fatigue/exhaustion factor created by short rests between sets.

Now it's up to you. Take what is here, get to the gym and apply it with consistency and intensity. Even at age 40, 50 and beyond, you can stimulate hyper hypertrophy and build your very own jaw-dropping physique.
POF Mass-Move Matrix
Position Exercises for Legs, Chest, Triceps

QUADRICEPS
Midrange: Squats, hack squats, Smith machine squats, leg presses, lunges
Stretch: Sissy squats
Contracted: Leg extensions

HAMSTRINGS
Midrange: Feet-forward Smith machine squats or front squats or hack squats
Stretch: Stiff-legged deadlifts, flat-back hyperextensions. seated leg curls
Contracted: Leg curls; one-leg leg curls

CALVES
Midrange: Knee-flexion leg press calf raises, some cardio work
Stretch: Donkey calf raises, leg press calf raises
Contracted: Standing calf raises, one-leg calf raises

CHEST
Upper Midrange: Incline presses, incline dumbbell presses
Upper Stretch: Incline flyes
Upper Contracted: Incline cable flyes, hands-high machine flyes, high cable flyes

Lower Midrange: Decline presses, wide-grip dips, bench presses
Lower Stretch: Decline flyes, flat-bench flyes
Lower Contracted: Low cable flyes, cable crossovers, machine flyes

TRICEPS
Midrange: Elbows-flared pushdowns, decline close-grip bench presses, decline extensions, dips (arms close to torso)
Stretch: Overhead extensions, high-cable pushouts (forward-lunge position)
Contracted: Pushdowns (one-arm version is best), dumbbell kickbacks
POF Mass-Move Matrix
Position Exercises for Back, Dels, Biceps, Abs

**LATS**

Midrange: Pulldowns to front or chinups to front
Stretch: Dumbbell pullovers, machine pullovers
Contracted: Undergrip pulldowns, undergrip rows, machine pullovers, stiff-arm pulldowns

**MIDBACK**

Midrange: Covered with lat midrange work
Stretch: One-arm dumbbell rows, V-handle cable rows
Contracted: Bent-arm bent-over laterals, shoulder-width-grip cable rows

**TRAPS**

Midrange: Close-grip upright rows
Stretch & Contracted: Forward-lean dumbbell shrugs

**DELTIDS**

Midrange: Wide-grip dumbbell upright rows, rack pulls, overhead presses (front head emphasis)
Stretch: Incline one-arm lateral raises, one-arm cable laterals
Contracted: Forward-leaning lateral raises, machine lateral raises

**BICEPS**

Midrange: Undergrip pulldowns or chins, barbell or dumbbell curls
preacher curls, cable curls
Stretch: Incline dumbbell curls
Contracted: Concentration curls, double-biceps cable curls, spider curls

**ABDOMINALS**

Midrange & Lower Contracted: Incline kneeups
Stretch & Upper Contracted: Ab Bench crunches, full-range crunches


STX Anabolic Reload Workout

Unfamiliar Exercises

1) <-- Sissy squats (quads, stretch). Hold onto the side of the leg extension machine or stable upright for balance. Squat, keeping your thighs and torso on the same plane until your hamstrings meet your calves.

2) One-arm cable laterals (dels, stretch). If possible, set the pulley at just below waist height so that at the bottom the pull is almost horizontal on the lateral-delt head. Alternate arms for standard sets. If you ever use it for STX (20, 8 R/P 5), work all sets for one arm before moving to your other arm. That’s necessary to maintain short rests (density).

3) Pushouts --> (triceps, stretch). Grab the pushdown handle or rope, face away from the machine and lunge forward until your torso is parallel to the floor. Extend the bar from behind your head to out in front of the top of your head.

4) <-- DB pullovers (lats, stretch—also triceps long head). With a DB in each hand, recline on a bench (do not lay crosswise). With the dumbbells at arm’s length over your face, lower back in an arc behind your head until the DBs are on the same plane as the bench. Without pausing in the stretch position, retrace the arc and pull the dumbbells back over your face. Immediately begin the next rep.