

# Hypertrophy Made Simple

Build a repeatable stimulus, track the response, and progress without turning averages into personal laws.

## PROGRESSIVE TRAINING

REPEATABLE RESISTANCE-TRAINING STIMULUS OVER TIME

## BASELINE → RESPONSE

MORE CAN HELP WITH DIMINISHING RETURNS; NO UNIVERSAL SET TARGET

## FAILURE NOT REQUIRED

BALANCE SUFFICIENT EFFORT AGAINST FATIGUE

STIMULUS → EVIDENCE → APPLICATION

## Build the stimulus; do not worship one number

### ESTABLISHED — THE REPEATABLE STIMULUS

Progressive resistance training can increase muscle size in healthy adults. Build a repeatable training stimulus over time; this does not guarantee a specific growth rate or equal response between people.

### SUPPORTED WITH CONDITIONS — VOLUME

More weekly hard-set volume tends to produce more hypertrophy with diminishing returns. Start from an observed baseline and adjust from your response; the evidence does not establish a universal 10-set floor, 20-set ceiling, or personal optimum.

### EFFORT, LOAD, AND REST ARE ADJUSTABLE LEVERS

Routine momentary failure is not required for hypertrophy; use sufficient effort while managing fatigue. Hypertrophy can occur across a broad load range, while heavier loads more clearly favor maximal-strength outcomes. Rest long enough to preserve the intended work and technique rather than obeying one clock.

### PROGRESSION IS A DECISION, NOT PROOF OF GROWTH

Progress training over time by adjusting an appropriate variable when declared targets are repeatable with acceptable technique and recovery. Double progression is one editorial worksheet rule—not a universally validated prescription—and a better logbook entry is not proof of hypertrophy.

### PROMISING — NOT SETTLED: SLEEP RESTRICTION

Five nights of severe sleep restriction suppressed a muscle-building process in 24 healthy young men. That narrow mechanistic study does not establish an exact sleep requirement or predict longitudinal muscle gain or loss.

### CLAIM MAP — FULL REFERENCES FOLLOW

Stimulus/progression/failure/volume → Currier/ACSM (2026); volume response → Pelland et al. (2025); load range → Refalo et al. (2021); failure boundary → Refalo, Helms et al. (2022); rest → Singer et al. (2024); sleep frontier → Saner et al. (2020).

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Nicholas J Saner; Matthew J-C Lee; Nathan W Pitchford; Juijiao Kuang; Gregory D Roach; Andrew Garnham; Tanner Stokes; Stuart M Phillips; David J Bishop; Jonathan D Bartlett. The effect of sleep restriction, with or without high-intensity interval exercise, on myofibrillar protein synthesis in healthy young men. The Journal of Physiology. 2020-03-11.

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### APPLICATION

## Audit the work, then earn the next change

### The stimulus-to-growth training checklist

For one muscle, first write one repeatable technique rule and one repeatable effort rule. Count only work sets completed under both written rules; exclude warm-ups and technique-practice sets, and hold the same counting rule constant across comparisons. Routine failure is not required. Complete every input and observation before adding work. This checklist guides a personal decision; it does not generate an optimum or prove hypertrophy.

Input — Muscle / exercise: \_\_\_\_\_ | Repeatable technique rule: \_\_\_\_\_

Input — Repeatable effort rule (routine failure is not required): \_\_\_\_\_

Input — Weekly work-set baseline under both rules; exclude warm-ups and technique-practice sets: \_\_\_\_\_ work sets

Observation — Does the load preserve both rules and intended work? yes / no \_\_\_\_\_ | If no: change the load before comparison. New load: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation — Does rest preserve both rules and intended work on the next set? yes / no \_\_\_\_\_ | If no: extend rest before comparison. Rest used: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation — Are performance, readiness, and severe sleep-disruption context recorded? yes / no \_\_\_\_\_ | If no: record them before adding work: \_\_\_\_\_

### Progression and recovery decision log

Write the baseline, compare the next repeat exposure, and change only one variable when targets, technique, and recovery support it. Double progression is optional editorial implementation—not a universal prescription.

Muscle / exercise / date: \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_

Declared target: sets \_\_\_\_\_ | rep range \_\_\_\_\_ | load \_\_\_\_\_ | effort method \_\_\_\_\_ | rest used \_\_\_\_\_

Observed work: reps by set \_\_\_\_\_ | technique repeatable? yes / no \_\_\_\_\_

Recovery before the next exposure: performance \_\_\_\_\_ | readiness \_\_\_\_\_ | sleep-disruption context \_\_\_\_\_

Decision: hold / change one variable / reduce work \_\_\_\_\_ | variable \_\_\_\_\_ | reason tied to baseline and response \_\_\_\_\_

Optional double progression: after all sets reach the declared rep top with acceptable technique and recovery, make one small load change and restart at the declared lower target.

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## WHAT TO DO MONDAY

### Log one baseline and make one earned change

#### What to Do Monday

##### 01 LOG ONE BASELINE

For one muscle, write technique and effort rules. Count work sets only when both are met; exclude warm-ups/technique practice. Keep the rule across comparisons. Failure is not required.

##### 02 STANDARDIZE THE WORK

Use repeatable technique, a controllable load, and enough rest to preserve the intended work. Routine failure is not required.

##### 03 PROGRESS ONE VARIABLE

When targets repeat with acceptable technique and recovery, change one variable. Double progression is an option, not a universal rule.

##### 04 REVIEW THE RESPONSE

Compare performance and recovery with baseline. Keep, add, or remove work from your response—not a universal set target.

#### How much weekly work should I start with?

No universal floor, ceiling, or personal optimum is established. Record your baseline and adjust volume from performance, recovery, and response; more tends to help with diminishing returns.

#### Must every hard set reach failure?

No. Momentary failure is not required for hypertrophy in the available evidence. Use sufficient effort while managing fatigue; no universal RIR target is established.

#### Is one rep range required for growth?

No. Hypertrophy can occur across a broad load range, while heavier loads more clearly favor maximal-strength outcomes. Choose loads that permit intended effort, technique, and progression.

#### Does the sleep study prove an exact nightly target?

No. It found a mechanistic effect after five nights of severe restriction in 24 healthy young men; it did not test long-term hypertrophy or establish a universal sleep requirement.

#### Plateau Audit

If performance or physique progress stalls, audit observation quality and choose one controlled next test instead of automatically adding volume.

Private library destination — link not activated.