

# Off-Season & Pre-Contest Training For Bodybuilders

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# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
Program Considerations.....	5
Program details .....	5
Off-Season Training (mass gaining) for bodybuilders Phase 1: Neural potentiation (3 weeks) .....	7
Off-Season Training (mass gaining) for bodybuilders Phase 2: Isolation activation/pre-fatigue (4 weeks) .....	9
Off-Season Training (mass gaining) for bodybuilders Phase 3: Triphasic hypertrophy (3 weeks) .....	11
Pre-contest Training for bodybuilders Phase 4: Low-volume/high intensity (4 weeks) .....	13
Pre-contest Training for bodybuilders Phase 5: High-density/loading conjugate (4 weeks).....	15
Pre-contest Training for bodybuilders Phase 6: High-density (3 weeks) .....	17
Pre-contest Training for bodybuilders Phase 7: Peaking (1 week) .....	19
About Christian Thibaudeau .....	21

# Training for Bodybuilders

## By Christian Thibaudeau

### Introduction

Training, much like fashion, seems to cycle in and out of style. What was “in” a few years back might get relegated to the bottom drawer for a while before resurfacing again in full force.

While this is true with most types of training, it's especially true in bodybuilding. In the late 70s, 80s and early 90s, bodybuilding training – not so much the sport, but the pursuit of a muscular and lean physique – was the most popular form of weight lifting being performed in gyms. Back in the 80s, bodybuilding was even gaining some mainstream acceptance.

Arnold brought the muscular body into the North American household; he had the physique that most men dreamt of having. Heck, at that time, bodybuilding was even aired on ESPN! That's right, men were not ashamed of saying that they were training to build large muscles and to look good *nekkid*.

Then, all of the sudden, bodybuilding became taboo. It was becoming the black sheep of the strength training family. A sad fate for what is actually the main reason why lifting weights became popular in the first place. Guys who were saying that they were training to look good were ridiculed and thought of as “not manly”. Functional training, Olympic lifting, kettle bells, swiss balls, indo boards and other such means became all the rage.

Yet one thing hasn't changed: most people start training in the first place because they want to look good, period! Sure athletes train to improve their performance. But from working with literally hundreds of athletes I can tell you that if you scratch the surface hard enough, you'll see that deep down they all want to improve their look at least as much as they want to perform better.

I have a rather unique point of view since I've been on both sides of the table: I competed in Olympic lifting and trained athletes – but I also competed in bodybuilding and trained bodybuilders. And I can tell you that there is nothing “weak” or “unmanly” about bodybuilding. Sure, the act of posing in front of cheering men wearing nothing but a speedo isn't exactly the most virile endeavor; but is it that much worse than swimming, gymnastics, Greco roman wrestling?

(At least there is no grabbing in bodybuilding.)

And forget about bodybuilding being easy. It's by far the hardest "sport" to be successful in. While sport training or strength training only requires hard work for 8-10 hours a week (in training), bodybuilding is a 24 hour thing. It is not limited to the 1-2 hours you spend in the gym. More than any other activity on the surface of the planet it is dependent on your nutritional and recovery habits – especially if you're natural. Of course, that's not to say that bodybuilding is a notch above all other sports, that's not true. But it deserves to be treated on equal ground.

With my lengthy introduction out of the way, I'd like to introduce the program you're about to read. This program is designed to help a bodybuilder prepare for a show by first adding muscle mass and then getting rid of all excess body fat while maintaining or even gaining additional muscle mass. While it is specifically designed for the competitive bodybuilder, anyone who is simply interested in getting big, lean and muscular can use the program with great results.

## Program Considerations

1. This program is not for beginners. It is primarily intended with individuals with competitive aspirations. While it can be applied to people simply wanting to look their best, those with less than 2 years of solid training should begin with a more basic program. This is due to the fact that some methods utilized in the program are not necessary for beginners.
2. This program is not intended for someone with an existing injury. One of the inherent problems with pre-designed templates is that the lifter is fit to the template and not vice versa. Be smart; don't do an exercise if you have any doubts about it being safe for YOU.
3. In bodybuilding, proper exercise technique is paramount. Not only to prevent injury (nobody has ever gotten bigger in the hospital) but also to make sure that the exercise performed hit the desired muscle group to make it grow.

## Program details

1. This program is divided into two macrocycles: an off-season/mass building cycle lasting 10 weeks and a pre-competition cycle lasting 12 weeks. Each of these macrocycles are then broken down into shorter mesocycles lasting anywhere from 1 to 4 weeks.
2. The off-season program (10 weeks) is divided into three phases/mesocycles: **Neural potentiation** (3 weeks) which is aimed at priming the body for growth by improving the efficacy of the central nervous system – which will improve the subsequent hypertrophy phases by facilitating the recruitment of the fast-twitch muscle fibers. It will also

increase strength which will allow you to use more weight in the pure hypertrophy phases. **Isolation activation/pre-fatigue** (4 weeks) which uses the pre-fatigue method to help improve the mind-muscle link when performing big compound movements. Having a stronger mind-muscle link will allow you to reap greater benefits from the big compound movements in subsequent phases as you will become better at contracting the proper muscle groups against a resistance rather than simply lifting the weight. **Triphasic hypertrophy** (3 weeks) which makes use of the three main stimuli for muscle growth (intramuscular tension, time under load, density of work).

3. The pre-competition program (12 weeks) is divided into 4 phases/mesocycles: **Low-volume/high intensity** (4 weeks) which uses intensive methods such as extended sets and drop sets to cause a lot of muscle fiber damage but a low volume of work to avoid excessive energy deprivation. This is important in the first phase of dieting as the body might have a hard time coping with the “stress” of going from a bulking/mass-gaining/higher calories diet to a pre-contest/lower calories diet. **High-density/loading conjugate** (4 weeks) which uses a mix of heavy and high density (lactate producing) lifting. The heavy lifting will facilitate the maintenance of muscle mass (you need to keep lifting heavy on a caloric deficit to “force” your body to keep the muscle required for the high force output to be produced) while the introduction of high-density training will help shed body fat faster. **High-density** (3 weeks) is the last “true” training phase and is aimed at bringing the body to shredded condition (minimizing body fat as much as possible). Heavy lifting is phased out mainly to avoid injury at that point (when the body is deprived and devoid of fat the risks of injury are greater). That’s why this phase is only 3 weeks in duration: to avoid losing muscle mass at all cost. **Peaking** (1 week) which is aimed first at depleting muscle glycogen and then to stimulate the surcompensation of the glycogen stores while promoting an increase in myogenic tone (muscles looking harder). During the 12 weeks of the pre-contest program cardio work is added and gradually increased to continue to shed body fat for the duration of the whole program.

4. Now, the most important part of this program, and it’s a good program, isn’t necessarily the training component. Sure, you have to train right to build muscle and to lose fat. But, most important of all, you simply won’t get into the best shape of your life to step on stage if you neglect your diet. More than any other sport, success in bodybuilding is dependent on your adherence to a sound nutritional plan. And John Berardi’s Precision Nutrition System will give you the necessary tools to build a nutritional program that will help you make the most out of this program.

## Off-Season Training (mass gaining) for bodybuilders Phase 1: Neural potentiation (3 weeks)

<b>Monday: Lower body quads dominant</b>						
	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Back squat (medium stance)	7,5,3,7,5,3	Normal lifting	5,3,2,5,3,2	Normal lifting	4,2,4,2	Normal lifting
B. Leg press (wide stance)	8,8,8	Low double contraction	6,6,6	Low double contraction	4,4,4	Low double contraction
C. Hack squat (close stance)	3 sets of 5x1 cluster	5x1 cluster	4 sets of 5x1 cluster	5x1 cluster	3 sets of 5x1 cluster	5 x 1 cluster
D. Leg extension	6,6,6 per leg	2/1 technique	5,5,5 per leg	2/1 technique	4,4,4 per leg	2/1 technique

**Low double contraction:** bring the weight down, lift it halfway up, bring it back down, lift it completely = 1 rep

**5x1 cluster:** perform sets of 5 reps but take 10 seconds of rest between each repetition (rack the weight)

**2/1 technique:** concentric (lifting) portion with 2 legs; eccentric (lowering) portion with 1 leg

<b>Tuesday: Upper body vertical dominance</b>						
	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Weighted chin-up or close-grip pulldown (supination grip)	8,8,6,6	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)	8,6,6,4	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)	6,4,4	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)
A2. Barbell military press	8,8,6,6	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)	8,6,6,4	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)	6,4,4	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)
B. Medium-grip lat pulldown, trunk leaning back 45 degrees	8,8,8	Peak double contraction	6,6,6	Peak double contraction	4,4,4	Peak double contraction
C. Incline bench press	8,8,8	Low double contraction	6,6,6	Low double contraction	4,4,4	Low double contraction
D. Barbell curl	3 sets of 5x1 cluster	5x1 cluster	4 sets of 5x1 cluster	5x1 cluster	3 sets of 5x1 cluster	5 x 1 cluster
E. Overhead dumbbell triceps extension	8,8,8	Low double contraction	6,6,6	Low double contraction	4,4,4	Low double contraction
F. Dumbbell shrugs	8,8,6,6	Normal lifting	8,6,6,4	Normal lifting	6,4,4	Normal lifting

**Alternate:** take 45 seconds between exercises, this is not a superset.

**Peak double contraction:** Pull the weight down, bring it back halfway up, pull it back down, bring it up = 1 rep

**Low double contraction:** bring the weight down, lift it halfway up, bring it back down, lift it completely = 1 rep

**5x1 cluster:** perform sets of 5 reps but take 10 seconds of rest between each repetition (rack the weight)

**Thursday: Lower body hips dominant**

Exercise	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Romanian deadlift	7,5,3,7,5,3	Normal lifting	5,3,2,5,3,2	Normal lifting	4,2,4,2	Normal lifting
B. Leg press (feet high on pad)	8,8,8	Low double contraction	6,6,6	Low double contraction	4,4,4	Low double contraction
C. Lunges (long steps)	8,8,8 per leg	Walking	6,6,6 per leg	Walking	4,4,4 per leg	Walking
D. Lying leg curl	6,6,6 per leg	2/1 technique	5,5,5 per leg	2/1 technique	4,4,4 per leg	2/1 technique

**Low double contraction:** bring the weight down, lift it halfway up, bring it back down, lift it completely = 1 rep

**Walking:** Perform the lunges in walking (stepping forward) style

**2/1 technique:** concentric (lifting) portion with 2 legs; eccentric (lowering) portion with 1 leg

**Saturday: Upper body horizontal dominance**

Exercise	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Bent over barbell rowing	8,8,6,6	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)	8,6,6,4	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)	6,4,4	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)
A2. Bench press (wide grip)	8,8,6,6	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)	8,6,6,4	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)	6,4,4	Normal lifting (alternate A1. and A2.)
B. 1-arm dumbbell rowing	8,8,8 per arm	Peak double contraction	6,6,6 per arm	Peak double contraction	4,4,4 per arm	Peak double contraction
C. Fly/Press	3 sets start at 8RM	Combo	3 sets start at 6RM	Combo	2 sets start at 4RM	Combo
D. Preacher curl (wide grip elbows in)	4 sets start at 8RM	Normal + peak partials	4 sets start at 6RM	Normal + peak partials	3 sets start at 4RM	Normal + peak partials
E. Close-grip bench press	8,8,8	Top double contraction	6,6,6	Top double contraction	4,4,4	Top double contraction
F. Bent over lateral raise	12,10,8	Normal + Iso hold	10,8,6	Normal + Iso hold	8,6,4	Normal + Iso hold

**Alternate:** take 45 seconds between exercises, this is not a superset.

**Peak double contraction:** Pull the weight down, bring it back halfway up, pull it back down, bring it up = 1 rep

**Combo:** Perform the number of flies prescribed to failure. When you reach failure lower the weight as a fly but lift it as a DB press until failure, when you reach failure switch to DB press (eccentric and concentric)

**Normal + peak partials:** Perform full reps to failure then complete as many top range partials as you can

**Top double contraction:** Lift the weight up, lower it halfway, lift it back up, lower it completely = 1 rep

**Normal + Iso hold:** Normal reps but hold the peak contraction position for 2-3 seconds on each rep



## Off-Season Training (mass gaining) for bodybuilders Phase 2: Isolation activation/pre-fatigue (4 weeks)

<b>Monday: Shoulders/Triceps/Traps</b>						
Week 1			Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Seated lateral raise	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
A2. Seated dumbbell press	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset
B1. Decline DB triceps extension	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
B2. Close grip bench press	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset
C1. Standing calves machine shrugs	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
C2. Barbell power shrugs (cheated barbell shrugs)	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset

**Pre-fatigue superset:** Perform both exercises one after the other without any rest (e.g. A1., no rest A2., rest 90 sec.)

<b>Tuesday: Quads/Hamstrings/Calves</b>						
Week 1			Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Leg extension	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
A2. Back squat	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset
B1. Leg curl	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
B2. Romanian deadlift	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset
C1. Seated calves	4 x 15-20	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset
C2. Standing calves	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset

**Pre-fatigue superset:** Perform both exercises one after the other without any rest (e.g. A1., no rest A2., rest 90 sec.)

<b>Thursday: Back/Rear delts</b>						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Straight-arms pulldown (or machine pullover)	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
A2. Medium-grip lat pulldown to the front (torso straight)	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset
B1. Seated straight-bar rowing (cable with supination grip)	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
B2. Bent over barbell rowing (pronation grip)	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset
C1. Rear delts machine	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
C2. Bent over lateral with bent elbows	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset

**Pre-fatigue superset:** Perform both exercises one after the other without any rest (e.g. A1., no rest A2., rest 90 sec.)

<b>Friday: Chest/Biceps</b>						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Incline dumbbell flies	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
A2. Incline bench press	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset
B1. Cable cross-over	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
B2. DB bench press	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset
C1. Preacher curl (wide grip)	4 x 12-15	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset
C2. Standing barbell curl	4 x 8-10	Pre-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Pre-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Pre-fatigue superset

**Pre-fatigue superset:** Perform both exercises one after the other without any rest (e.g. A1., no rest A2., rest 90 sec.)

## Off-Season Training (mass gaining) for bodybuilders Phase 3: Triphasic hypertrophy (3 weeks)

Monday: Shoulders/Triceps						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Seated barbell shoulder press	4 x Start at 8RM	Extended	4 x Start at 6RM	Extended	3 x Start at 4RM	Extended
B1. Seated dumbbell press	4 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Post-fatigue superset
B2. Standing lateral raise	4 x 12-15	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset
C. Close grip bench press	4 x Start at 8RM	Extended	4 x Start at 6RM	Extended	3 x Start at 4RM	Extended
D1. Decline skullcrusher	4 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Post-fatigue superset
D2. Cable triceps pushdown	4 x 12-15	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset

**Extended:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, rest 10-15 sec., perform a few more reps to failure again

**Post-fatigue superset:** Perform both exercises one after the other without any rest (e.g. A1., no rest A2., rest 90 sec.)

Tuesday: Quads/Hamstrings						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Leg press (close stance)	4 x Start at 8RM	Extended	4 x Start at 6RM	Extended	3 x Start at 4RM	Extended
B1. Front squat	4 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Post-fatigue superset
B2. Leg extension	4 x 12-15	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset
C. Lying leg curl	4 x Start at 8RM	Extended	4 x Start at 6RM	Extended	3 x Start at 4RM	Extended
D1. Romanian deadlift (dumbbells)	4 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Post-fatigue superset
D2. Standing leg curl	4 x 12-15 per leg	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12 per leg	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10 per leg	Post-fatigue superset

**Extended:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, rest 10-15 sec., perform a few more reps to failure again

**Post-fatigue superset:** Perform both exercises one after the other without any rest (e.g. A1., no rest A2., rest 90 sec.)

<b>Thursday: Back/Rear delts</b>						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Chest supported rowing	4 x Start at 8RM	Extended	4 x Start at 6RM	Extended	3 x Start at 4RM	Extended
B1. Medium grip lat pulldown (torso leaning back 45 deg.)	4 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Post-fatigue superset
B2. DB pullover (one dumbbell with both hands)	4 x 12-15	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset
C. Rear delt machine	4 x Start at 8RM	Extended	4 x Start at 6RM	Extended	3 x Start at 4RM	Extended
D1. Bent over dumbbell rowing (elbows out/upper arm in line with shoulders)	4 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Post-fatigue superset
D2. Chest supported rear delt raise	4 x 12-15	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset

**Extended:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, rest 10-15 sec., perform a few more reps to failure again

**Post-fatigue superset:** Perform both exercises one after the other without any rest (e.g. A1., no rest A2., rest 90 sec.)

<b>Friday: Chest/Biceps</b>						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Low-incline bench press (15-30 deg.)	4 x Start at 8RM	Extended	4 x Start at 6RM	Extended	3 x Start at 4RM	Extended
B1. DB bench press	4 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Post-fatigue superset
B2. Cable cross-over	4 x 12-15	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset
C. Standing barbell curl (EZ bar)	4 x Start at 8RM	Extended	4 x Start at 6RM	Extended	3 x Start at 4RM	Extended
D1. DB hammer curl	4 x 8-10	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 6-8	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 4-6	Post-fatigue superset
D2. Reverse barbell curl	4 x 12-15 per leg	Post-fatigue superset	5 x 10-12 per leg	Post-fatigue superset	3 x 8-10 per leg	Post-fatigue superset

**Extended:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, rest 10-15 sec., perform a few more reps to failure again

**Post-fatigue superset:** Perform both exercises one after the other without any rest (e.g. A1., no rest A2., rest 90 sec.)

## Pre-contest Training for bodybuilders Phase 4: Low-volume/high intensity (4 weeks)

Monday: Shoulders/Triceps/Traps						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Seated machine shoulder press	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 4RM	Extended drop
B. Standing lateral raise	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
C. Standing cable lateral (1 arm at a time)	1 x Start at 12RM	Normal + eccentrics	1 x Start at 10RM	Normal + eccentrics	1 x Start at 8RM	Normal + eccentrics
D. Barbell triceps extension/press	2 x Start at 8RM	Combo	2 x Start at 6RM	Combo	2 x Start at 4RM	Combo
E. Cable triceps pushdown	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
F. Standing calves machine shrugs	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 30 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Extended drop:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, drop the weight by around 25% and continue to perform reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more reps to failure, drop the weight by 25% and continue to perform reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds and perform a few more reps

**Normal + eccentrics:** When you reach failure use the free hand to help lift the weight and lower it with the work arm as slowly as possible... perform 3-4 eccentric reps

**Combo:** Start movement as a skullcrusher, as you reach failure you continue to execute the eccentric portion as a skullcrusher but you perform the concentric as a close-grip bench press

Tuesday: Quads/Hamstrings						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Leg press (close stance)	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 4RM	Extended drop
B. Hack squat	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
C. Single-Leg extension	1 x Start at 12RM	Normal + eccentrics	1 x Start at 10RM	Normal + eccentrics	1 x Start at 8RM	Normal + eccentrics
D. Lying leg curl	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 4RM	Extended drop
E. Lying single leg curl	1 x Start at 12RM	Normal + eccentrics	1 x Start at 10RM	Normal + eccentrics	1 x Start at 8RM	Normal + eccentrics

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 30 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Extended drop:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, drop the weight by around 25% and continue to perform reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more reps to failure, drop the weight by 25% and continue to perform reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds and perform a few more reps

**Normal + eccentrics:** When you reach failure use the free leg to help lift the weight and lower it with the work leg as slowly as possible... perform 3-4 eccentric reps

### Thursday: Back/Rear delts

Exercise	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Straight-arms pulldown (or machine pullover)	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
B. Close-grip lat pulldown (supination grip)	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
C. Cable seated rowing	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
D. Rope seated rowing to the face	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
E. Bent over DB lateral raise	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended
F. Rear delts machine	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 30 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Extended drop:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, drop the weight by around 25% and continue to perform reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more reps to failure, drop the weight by 25% and continue to perform reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds and perform a few more reps

**Extended:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, rest 10-15 sec., perform a few more reps to failure again

### Friday: Chest/Biceps

Exercise	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Smith machine incline bench press	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 4RM	Extended drop
B. Cable cross-over	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
C. Fly/press	2 x Start at 8RM	Combo	2 x Start at 6RM	Combo	2 x Start at 4RM	Combo
D. Barbell curl	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended	2 x Start at 4RM	Extended
E. Machine curl	2 x Start at 10RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 8RM	Extended drop	2 x Start at 6RM	Extended drop
F. Single-arm machine curl	1 x Start at 12RM	Normal + eccentrics	1 x Start at 10RM	Normal + eccentrics	1 x Start at 8RM	Normal + eccentrics

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 30 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Extended drop:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, drop the weight by around 25% and continue to perform reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more reps to failure, drop the weight by 25% and continue to perform reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds and perform a few more reps

**Extended:** Start with the prescribed number of reps to failure, rest 10-15 seconds, perform a few more to failure, rest 10-15 sec., perform a few more reps to failure again

**Combo:** Perform the number of flies prescribed to failure. When you reach failure lower the weight as a fly but lift it as a DB press until failure, when you reach failure switch to DB press (eccentric and concentric)

**Normal + eccentrics:** When you reach failure use the free arm to help lift the weight and lower it with the work arm as slowly as possible... perform 3-4 eccentric reps

### Saturday

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 45 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

## Pre-contest Training for bodybuilders

### Phase 5: High-density/loading conjugate (4 weeks)

<b>Monday: Shoulders/Triceps</b>						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Seated dumbbell press	8,8,6,6,4	Normal	8,6,6,4,4	Normal	6,6,4,4	Normal
B1. Seated lateral raise	4 x 8-10	Triple set	4 x 6-8	Triple set	3 x 4-6	Triple set
B2. Dumbbell front raise	4 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set	4 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set	3 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set
B3. Seated dumbbell press	4 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set	4 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set	3 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set
C. Close-grip bench press	8,8,6,6,4	Normal	8,6,6,4,4	Normal	6,6,4,4	Normal
D1. Decline dumbbell triceps extension	4 x 8-10	Superset	4 x 6-8	Superset	3 x 4-6	Superset
D2. Close-grip push up (don't lockout)	4 x max	Superset	4 x max	Superset	3 x max	Superset

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Triple set:** Three exercises performed without rest (rest once the 3 exercises have been performed)

**Superset:** Two exercises performed without rest (rest once the 2 exercises have been performed)

<b>Tuesday: Quads/Hamstrings</b>						
	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Back squat	8,8,6,6,4	Normal	8,6,6,4,4	Normal	6,6,4,4	Normal
B1. Hack squat	3 x 8-10	Triple set	3 x 6-8	Triple set	3 x 4-6	Triple set
B2. Bulgarian squat	3 x 10-12 per leg	Triple set	3 x 8-10 per leg	Triple set	3 x 6-8 per leg	Triple set
B3. Single-leg extension	3 x 12-15 per leg	Triple set	3 x 10-12 per leg	Triple set	3 x 8-10 per leg	Triple set
C1. Romanian deadlift	4 x 8-10	Superset	4 x 6-8	Superset	3 x 4-6	Superset
C2. Lying leg curl	4 x 12-15	Superset	4 x 10-12	Superset	3 x 8-10	Superset

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Triple set:** Three exercises performed without rest (rest once the 3 exercises have been performed)

**Superset:** Two exercises performed without rest (rest once the 2 exercises have been performed)

### Thursday: Back/Rear delts

Exercise	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Barbell rowing	8,8,6,6,4	Normal	8,6,6,4,4	Normal	6,6,4,4	Normal
B1. Wide grip lat pulldown behind the neck	4 x 8-10	Triple set	4 x 6-8	Triple set	3 x 4-6	Triple set
B2. Medium grip lat pulldown to the front	4 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set	4 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set	3 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set
B3. Close-grip lat pulldown (with supinated grip)	4 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set	4 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set	3 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set
C1. Bent over lateral raise	4 x 8-10	Superset	4 x 6-8	Superset	3 x 4-6	Superset
C2. Rear delt machine	4 x 12-15	Superset	4 x 10-12	Superset	3 x 8-10	Superset

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Triple set:** Three exercises performed without rest (rest once the 3 exercises have been performed)

**Superset:** Two exercises performed without rest (rest once the 2 exercises have been performed)

### Friday: Chest/Biceps

Exercise	Week 1		Weeks 2-3		Week 4	
	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Incline DB bench press	8,8,6,6,4	Normal	8,6,6,4,4	Normal	6,6,4,4	Normal
B1. High incline DB flies (45-60 deg.)	4 x 8-10	Triple set	4 x 6-8	Triple set	3 x 4-6	Triple set
B2. Low incline DB flies (15-30 deg.)	4 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set	4 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set	3 x max (same weight as B1.)	Triple set
B3. Flat DB flies	4 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set	4 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set	3 x max (same weight as B1 and B2)	Triple set
C1. Preacher curl	4 x 8-10	Superset	4 x 6-8	Superset	3 x 4-6	Superset
C2. Reverse curl	4 x 12-15	Superset	4 x 10-12	Superset	3 x 8-10	Superset

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Triple set:** Three exercises performed without rest (rest once the 3 exercises have been performed)

**Superset:** Two exercises performed without rest (rest once the 2 exercises have been performed)

### Saturday

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 45 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline



## Pre-contest Training for bodybuilders Phase 6: High-density (3 weeks)

Monday: Shoulders/Triceps						
Week 1			Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Cuban press	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
A2. Seated lateral raise	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
B1. Dumbbell front raise	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
B2. Seated dumbbell press	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
C1. Close-grip bench press	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
C2. Lying dumbbell triceps extension	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Compound set:** Go back and forth between the two exercises taking 20 seconds of rest between each one (e.g. A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec... etc) Start with a weight that would be approximately 50-75% of the max weight you could use for the prescribe number of reps and try to keep using the same weight for all sets.

Tuesday: Quads/Hamstrings/Calves						
Week 1			Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Hack squat (close stance)	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
A2. Leg extension	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
B1. Romanian deadlift	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
B2. Lying leg curl	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
C1. Standing calves raise	5 x 10	Compound set	4 x 12	Compound set	3 x 15	Compound set
C2. Seated calves raise	5 x 10	Compound set	4 x 12	Compound set	3 x 15	Compound set

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Compound set:** Go back and forth between the two exercises taking 20 seconds of rest between each one (e.g. A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec... etc) Start with a weight that would be approximately 50-75% of the max weight you could use for the prescribe number of reps and try to keep using the same weight for all sets.

### Thursday: Back/Rear delts

	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Close-grip lat pulldown (supination grip)	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
A2. Straight-arms pulldown	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
B1. Chest-supported DB rowing	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
B2. Seated rowing	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
C1. Rear delt machine	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
C2. Bent over lateral raise	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Compound set:** Go back and forth between the two exercises taking 20 seconds of rest between each one (e.g. A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec... etc) Start with a weight that would be approximately 50-75% of the max weight you could use for the prescribe number of reps and try to keep using the same weight for all sets.

### Friday: Chest/Biceps

	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Low incline DB press (15-30 deg.)	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
A2. Low incline DB flies	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
B1. Wide grip bench press	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
B2. Cable cross-over	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
C1. Preacher curl	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set
C2. Seated incline DB curl	8 x 6	Compound set	6 x 8	Compound set	5 x 10	Compound set

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

**Compound set:** Go back and forth between the two exercises taking 20 seconds of rest between each one (e.g. A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec... etc) Start with a weight that would be approximately 50-75% of the max weight you could use for the prescribe number of reps and try to keep using the same weight for all sets.

### Saturday

Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 45 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline

## Pre-contest Training for bodybuilders Phase 7: Peaking (1 week)

<b>Monday: Depletion workout/Whole body</b>						
Week 1			Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Leg extension	4 x 15-20	Antagonist superset				
A2. Lying leg curl	4 x 15-20	Antagonist superset				
B1. Medium-grip lat pulldown to the front (torso leaning back 45 degrees)	4 x 15-20	Antagonist superset				
B2. Low-incline DB press (15-30 deg.)	4 x 15-20	Antagonist superset				
C1. Standing lateral raise	4 x 15-20	Antagonist superset				
C2. Bent over lateral raise	4 x 15-20	Antagonist superset				
D1. Preacher curl	4 x 15-20	Antagonist superset				
D2. Cable triceps pushdown	4 x 15-20	Antagonist superset				
Low-intensity cardio: treadmill 40 minutes at 3.0mph and a 12 degrees incline						
<b>Antagonist superset:</b> Perform both exercises of a superset one after the other without any rest						

<b>Tuesday: Depletion workout 2/Whole body</b>						
Week 1			Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A1. Hack squat (close stance)	3 x 10-12	Antagonist superset				
A2. DB Romanian deadlift	3 x 10-12	Antagonist superset				
B1. Chest-supported DB rowing	3 x 10-12	Antagonist superset				
B2. Bench press	3 x 10-12	Antagonist superset				
C1. Seated DB press	3 x 10-12	Antagonist superset				
C2. Seated rope rowing to the neck	3 x 10-12	Antagonist superset				
D1. Barbell curl	3 x 10-12	Antagonist superset				
D2. Close-grip bench press	3 x 10-12	Antagonist superset				

**Compound set:** Go back and forth between the two exercises taking 20 seconds of rest between each one (e.g. A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec., A2, rest 20 sec., A1, rest 20 sec... etc) Start with a weight that would be approximately 50-75% of the max weight you could use for the prescribe number of reps and try to keep using the same weight for all sets.

<b>Wednesday: Glycogen storage stimulation workout/Myogenic tone</b>						
	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3	
Exercise	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique	Loading	Technique
A. Machine seated rowing	5 x 4-6	Normal*				
B. Machine bench press	5 x 4-6	Normal*				
C. Close-grip lat pulldown (supination grip)	5 x 4-6	Normal*				
D. Machine shoulder press	5 x 4-6	Normal*				
E. Machine curl	5 x 4-6	Normal*				
F. Cable triceps pushdown	5 x 4-6	Normal*				
* Normal set but try to minimize the eccentric portion of the movement (don't resist the weight too much on the way down)						

**No workouts after Wednesday to allow for maximum glycogen surcompensation.**

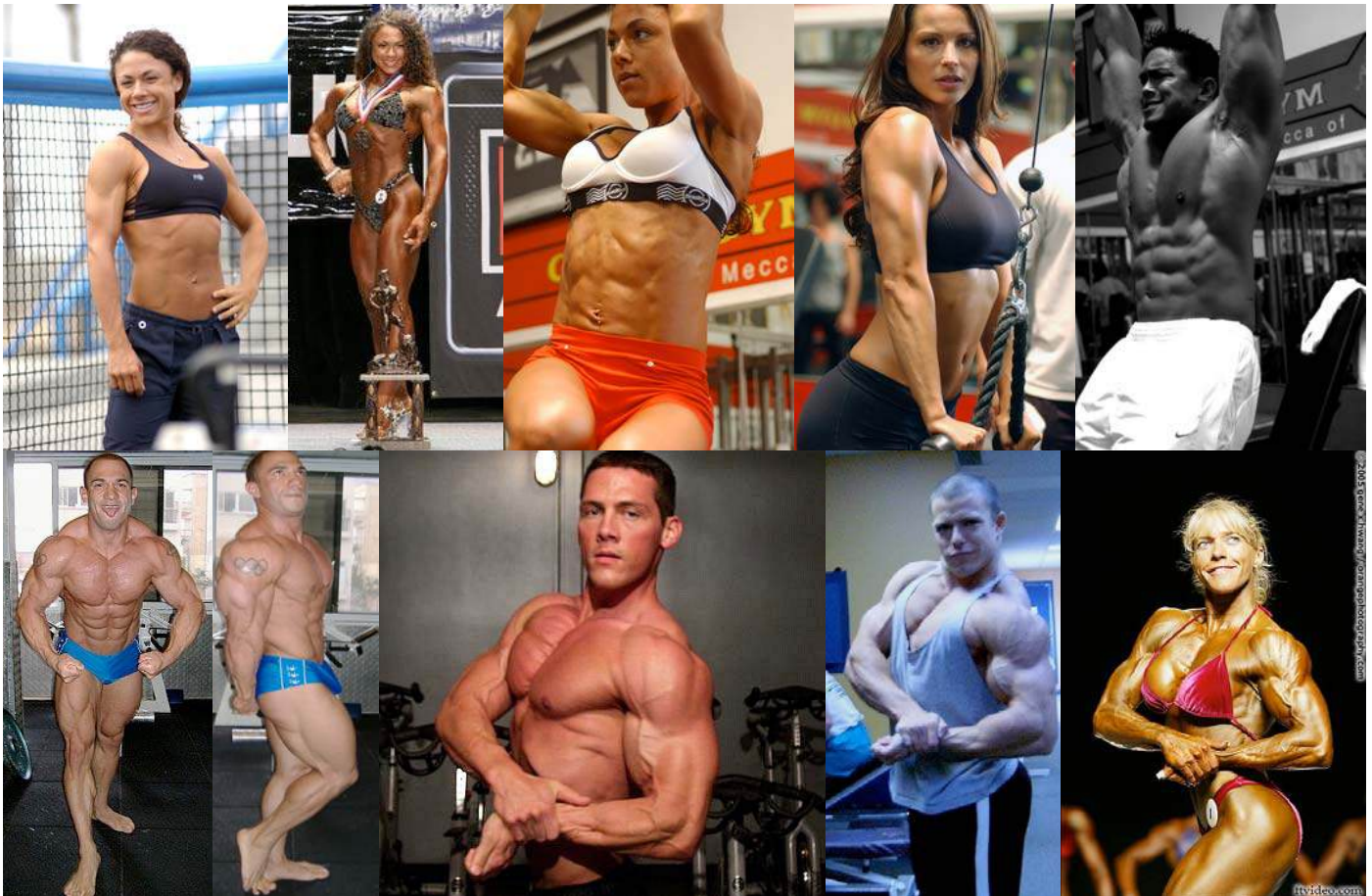
# About Christian Thibaudeau



Christian Thibaudeau received his B.Sc. in Exercise Science from the UQTR (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières) and has completed his M.Sc.'s credits at the same University.

He has competed in Olympic weightlifting, bodybuilding and strongmen competitions himself and has trained numerous elite athletes from various sports (26 different sports), ranging from pros and top level amateurs right down to young teenage athletes.

Over the last few years he has specialized in preparing/training bodybuilders and physiques athletes, helping them reach their all time best shape (see pictures for some examples of his clients).



In addition to his work as a coach, Christian is a popular speaker, giving seminars in both French and English. He has also published three books:

[The Black Book of Training Secrets](#)

[Theory and Application of Modern Strength and Power Methods](#)

[Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: Body Transformation from Both Sides of the Force](#)

(All three of these books are available for purchase at [www.muscledrivethru.com](http://www.muscledrivethru.com)).



Coach Thibaudeau is available for online training consultations which include an individualized training program, nutrition plan and unlimited email/phone support. Yet he can only take on a limited number of clients at any given time. So if you're interested in having Christian as your own personal coach, email him at [christianthibaudeau\\_1@hotmail.com](mailto:christianthibaudeau_1@hotmail.com) soon.