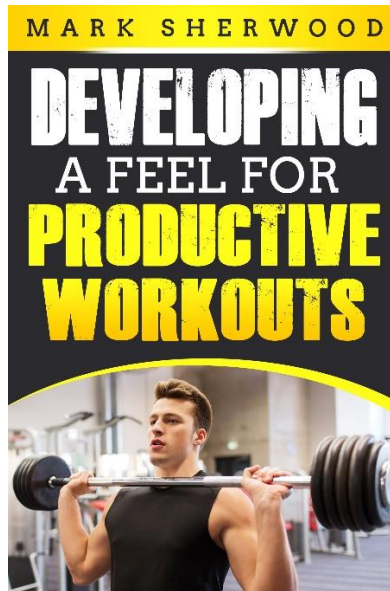


MARK SHERWOOD

DEVELOPING  
A FEEL FOR  
PRODUCTIVE  
WORKOUTS



# Developing A Feel For Productive Workouts



Mark Sherwood

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Developing A Feel For Productive Workouts

By Mark Sherwood

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## Introduction

If you have ever been confused in regard to the best way to work out with weights, you are part of a vast multitude who have experienced the same problem. There are so many ideas floating around out there about how to work out that it's like drawing straws to see which idea turns out to be the winner.

One concept that will help you sift through the endless plethora of weight training ideas is to learn to listen to your body. The body speaks its own language and the challenge is to be able to interpret how a workout feels in relationship to productive training. Through time and experience, you will begin to understand when your body is telling you that you are doing the right thing to cause it to grow bigger and stronger. You will also learn to sense your body's warning signs and how it feels when you are on the wrong path in regard to effective training.

Some lifters thrive on volume, some thrive on intensity, and some thrive on frequency, but most will thrive on a moderate balance between the three. You must learn what it feels like when you have done enough, and what it feels like when you have done too much. The right amount for someone else may be the wrong amount for you, and you must learn to listen to your body to find the right amount for yourself.

You are an individual. The challenge that is presented in this book is to learn how to listen to your body in order to discover your body's own language for positive results. There are no exact rules for this except to go through a process of trial and error while asking the right questions along the way. The rest of this book is designed to help you discover how to do this.

# Chapter 1

## The Link Between Body Sense And Performance

One of the keys to weight training success is to develop the ability to tune in to your body. You must learn how to discern when your training feels right, and when it doesn't. You need to know what it feels like when you have done the right amount of training volume, and when you have done too much, or not enough training volume. The same is true for intensity and training frequency. This being the case, what are some of the things you are supposed to feel, and what are some of the indicators that tell you when you are doing the right amount?

### **Feelings vs. Performance Indicators**

I highly regard a lifter and coach by the name of Charles Staley. He is well into his 50's and still lifting, yet he seems to be better now than when he was in his 20's and 30's. One of the things that Charles stresses is that some lifters are chasing a feeling without the correct interpretation of how that feeling is affecting their performance. This becomes a problem when a physical feeling becomes more of a measure for effective training than actual performance. For example, there are lifters and bodybuilders who want a muscle to feel as though it has been annihilated, obliterated, and wiped out. They want to feel extreme soreness and fatigue after a workout and believe that it will lead to improved performance. These lifters have become so convinced that the physical feelings are important that they lose sight of whether or not those feelings are leading to a measurable increase in size or strength.

I believe it is extremely important to be tuned-in to how your body feels during a workout, but I also believe that it is very important to have a correct interpretation of what you feel. The important thing is to learn how your body and your workouts feel when your performance is improving in terms of an increase in size and/or strength. The problem is that many lifters are tuned-in to the wrong physical feelings, and the feelings they think they should be experiencing are actually undermining their performance.

Performance is the chief consideration. When it comes to learning the right feel of an effective workout, the right feel must lead to an improvement in performance. If it doesn't, you must reconsider what the right feel is until you develop the body sense to distinguish the difference between physical feelings that lead to progress, and physical feelings that undermine progress. This can be tricky if we buy into some of the mindsets that are based on trying to achieve physical feelings that actually do more harm than good. What are some of these mindsets?

## Chapter 2

### Mind-Sets And Ideas

#### **No Pain No Gain**

Anyone who is highly motivated and truly serious about getting bigger and stronger can easily fall into the “*no pain, no gain*,” trap. Even though this philosophy may produce negative effects for many lifters, if chasing the pain in your workouts is leading to obvious improvement, then keep doing it as long as it works. The “*no pain, no gain*” philosophy does seem to work for some lifters. However, if you keep trying to turn up the intensity so that your muscles are screaming and crying with pain during your workouts, but it doesn’t lead to an increase in size or strength, then the *no pain no gain* philosophy is not for you. Stop thinking that you have to push to the point where you feel like you are about to die when you work out. Lift for progress, not pain.

#### **Feeling Like Your Smoked, Gassed, and Wiped Out**

Some lifters want to lift to the point where they can barely make it back to the locker room after a workout. They think it is a good thing when they feel totally wiped out the next day as they believe that it is proof that they have trained hard enough to force their body to respond. This is not a good long-term strategy for most lifters. It may be that some lifters make their best progress when they feel wiped out and wasted after a workout. These lifters are the ones who should use this strategy. However, excessive fatigue is a warning sign of overtraining for the majority of lifters, especially natural lifters who do not use performance enhancement drugs. Such lifters should strive to work out in a manner that leaves them energized after a workout, not drained and wiped out.

#### **Soreness**

Another feeling and sensation that lifters try to achieve is soreness. Some people will employ any training tactic, no matter how severe, in order to make a muscle sore. These people believe that soreness is the key to successful training. Of course, if it works, keep doing it, however, if it doesn’t lead to an increase in size or strength, it is wasted effort that is resulting in activity without achievement.

## Chapter 3

### The Pump

For some bodybuilders, it's all about the pump. They measure their workouts by the amount of pump they get instead of looking to see if their workouts are leading to an increase in strength or size. Personally, I think the pump has value for some bodybuilders more than others. Most bodybuilders try to get pumped when they workout. A notable exception would be Bob Gajda, a Mr. America and Mr. Universe from the mid 1960's.

Bob Gajda is often credited with popularizing a training method called peripheral heart action (PHA). It is basically circuit training that requires a lifter to keep switching to different muscle groups when proceeding from set to set instead of doing several consecutive sets for the same muscle group. This type of training actually keeps a specific muscle from becoming overly pumped during a workout by causing blood to flow throughout the whole body instead of flooding a single muscle group. Bob felt that PHA was much better for the heart, circulatory system, and lymphatic system. He also believed it worked for bodybuilding when done correctly, and it certainly worked for Bob.

For those bodybuilders who make the pump a priority, the pump is an indicator that a sufficient amount of volume and intensity have been provided to stimulate the muscle being worked. If you are doing a workout that is designed to produce a pump, but you aren't getting a pump, the most basic reasons for not getting a pump are listed below:

You haven't performed the exercise correctly to stimulate a pump.

You haven't done enough sets or reps to stimulate a pump.

You haven't trained with enough intensity to stimulate a pump.

If you work a muscle group too long within the same training session, you may find that you lose the pump you had attained earlier in the workout.

Training too often can kill your ability to get a pump. Many bodybuilders can only get a good pump in each muscle group once or twice per week. Trying to get a full pump more often may hinder your ability to get a pump, but this is an individual matter as some bodybuilders can get a pump more often.

Poor nutrition can also kill your ability to get a pump. Make sure to get enough protein and complex carbohydrates.

#### **Are You Getting Bigger or Stronger?**

While some bodybuilders place a high priority on getting a good pump, I know that it is possible to chase the pump while neglecting to consider whether it is leading to an increase in size or strength. If you keep getting a good pump during your workouts, but it isn't leading to an increase in size or strength, consider changing the way that you go about getting a pump until you find a way that helps you to get bigger and stronger.



## Chapter 4

### Asking The Right Questions

Workouts should not be based solely on feelings such as, pain, feeling wiped out with fatigue, getting sore, or getting a good pump. None of these things represent progress in and of themselves. If you know that these sensations are leading to progress, then keep doing whatever is necessary to produce them. However, if you are not getting bigger or stronger, then you are being misled by physical feelings that may be doing more harm than good.

I have heard both powerlifters and bodybuilders stress that you must be tuned in to what your body is telling you. Leroy Colbert, Phil Heath, Richard Hawthorne, and Brad Schoenfeld, have all made mention of this as an important factor in their success. I can't speak for any of these men in regard to what they feel when they workout. Likewise, I can't tell you exactly what you should feel when you work out. What I can do is to give you my own opinion in regard to how to develop a feel for productive workouts. This is based on several factors which can be addressed by asking the right questions. These questions are asked and discussed below:

#### **What should you feel in the target muscles?**

Bodybuilders should feel a strong contraction in the muscles they are targeting when performing an exercise.

#### **What should it feel like when your goal is to lift a lot of weight?**

Powerlifters should feel the right body positioning, the right bar path, the right muscles working together, and the right lifting motion. All of these variables may differ from one lifter to another depending on the specific exercise being performed, the anatomical proportions of the individual lifter, and the technique they choose to use. The important thing is that a lifter must learn what a good lift feels like within the context of their own body, and practice it in order to replicate it on a regular basis.

#### **How hard should you push each set?**

Lifters should tune in to their rep speed and rep rhythm when performing each set. When fatigue sets in and your rep speed starts to noticeably slow down, it is often an indicator that the set should be terminated. This means that most lifters will stop a set one to three reps short of reaching max reps to failure. While I think this is good advice for the majority of lifters, it is likely that there are some lifters who may benefit from pushing harder than this by pushing some of their sets to failure.

Those who push to failure should probably only do so on the last set of each exercise. A lifter who pushes to failure must be aware of how often they can do so before it has a negative effect on their strength and muscle size. Perhaps there are lifters who can push to failure on their last set in every workout, but other lifters who push to failure may only be able to do so once per week, or once every other week. Once again, I believe that most people are better off leaving one to three reps in the tank and never pushing to failure. This is especially true when the goal is long-term progress. The answer to how hard you should push each set can only be determined through trial and error and evaluating your results.

### **How many sets should be performed for each muscle group?**

Lifters should tune-in to how many sets they can perform at full strength for a given muscle group. I believe that most lifters should stop training a muscle group when it will no longer recover back to full strength.

If a lifter continues to train beyond the point of being at full strength, they will be training in a weakened state. It is possible that some lifters will benefit from this. Those who benefit from lifting in a weakened state should know how much they can train beyond the point of being at full strength. For some lifters, this may be determined by a certain number of sets, others may be able to determine the best place to stop doing sets by instinct and feel.

### **How many sets before you are pumped?**

Lifters should tune-in to how many sets it takes to get a pump.

### **How many sets before you start to lose your pump?**

Once a lifter reaches the point of feeling pumped, he or she must be able to determine how many sets they can perform while maintaining a pump. Vince Gironda was a famous trainer who emphasized that once you have a pump, be especially aware of how many sets you can perform before you lose your pump. Learn from experience so that you do not continue to repeat sets to the point where you lose your pump.

## Chapter 5

### Monitoring Your Level Of Energy

When evaluating how you feel, one of the main considerations should be to evaluate your level of energy. Every lifter should be highly tuned-in to their level of energy in five different dimensions by answering these questions:

1. How much energy do you have when starting a workout?
2. How much energy do you have throughout your workout?
3. How much energy do you have at the conclusion of your workout?
4. How much energy do you have between workouts?
5. How much time does it take to fully regain your energy before working out again?

I believe you should have a high level of energy when working out. Sometimes evaluating your level of energy for a workout can get a little tricky. For example, if you are in a relaxed state right before your workout, you may find that you are sleepy and lack energy. However, as you warm up and your blood starts flowing, you become alert and energized. This is very different than going through an entire workout with a lack of energy and you must learn the difference.

If your energy level is noticeably compromised, you should experiment until you find the right amount of training that allows you to remain at a high energy level. If you consistently suffer from low energy during workouts, it could be a symptom of overtraining. The same is true if you train until you are wiped out at the conclusion of your workouts and continue to feel that way in between workouts.

Low energy usually results in poor workouts and poor recovery. Overtraining is not the only culprit for low energy as it can also be caused by:

Too much stress

Lack of sleep

Insufficient nutrition

Sickness or health problems

If you are generally healthy and have sufficient energy when you are not doing regular workouts, but you find your energy level goes down when you engage in regular workouts, consider changing the way you work out that allows you to recover to the point where you fully regain your energy.

#### **Are You At Full Strength When You Are Scheduled To Work Out?**

You must consider whether or not you are at full strength when it is time to do a workout. If it frequently seems like you are not, then you must ask yourself why.

Is it because you did too many sets in your last workout(s)?

Did you push your sets too hard in the last workout?

Are you giving yourself enough time to recover between workouts?

If you often feel as though you are not fully recovered when following your workout plan, then you need to change your plan by either decreasing the number of sets, decreasing the amount of intensity, or decreasing how often you train.

### **Resting Too Long Between Workouts**

While some lifters train too often and need to cut back, this isn't true of everyone. It is possible to wait too long between workouts. If this is true in your case, you will fully recover between workouts, but you will suffer from detraining and adaptive decay before starting the next workout. Adaptive decay refers to waiting so long between workouts that you lose the benefits you gained from the previous workout(s). If you are resting each muscle group a week or more between workouts and you can't seem to get stronger, consider the possibility that you are not working out often enough.

## Chapter 6

### Watch Out For The Noise In Your Head

At this point, I want to warn you to watch out for the noise in your head. What do I mean by that? I mean that most of us have had exposure to ideas about strength training and bodybuilding. Those ideas either come from our own thinking and observations, or from books, magazines, and ideas we have read on the internet. Ideas also come from what we see and hear on videos, TV, or in a gym as we watch others train and talk with them about training.

The noise in your head may come from hearing that the best routine ever is 5 x 5, or some other popular method such as, the Westside Method, 5-3-1, or the Texas Method. This is especially true if you hear of testimonials of wild success of those who have used these programs. The problem is that you may feel obligated and bound to perform a certain number of sets and reps, or to use a certain percentage of your max. This is often a good thing for a while; however, it may cause you to focus all your attention on a predetermined number of sets, reps, and weight to the point where you never pay attention to what your own body is telling you. If this happens, you will never optimize your training according to the individual characteristics of your own physiology.

#### **Personal Experience**

Let me give you some examples from my own experience and how I let the noise get into my head to the point where I couldn't hear what my own body was saying. When I first began training, I looked to the best bodybuilder at that time, which happened to be Arnold Schwarzenegger. Arnold's basic method was to perform 20 sets per body part and to train each body part three times per week. That's 60 sets per body part per week. Franco, Robbie Robinson, Sergio Oliva, and Bill Pearl trained in a similar fashion. All I could focus on was 20 sets per muscle group. I never bothered to listen to what my body was telling me because I figured the top bodybuilders knew everything. As a result, all I focused on was a number; the number being 20 sets.

Then Mike Mentzer came along. He believed that most bodybuilders were overtraining and you only needed to do a few sets per muscle group, but you had to push each set to failure if you were serious about growing bigger or stronger. If you stopped growing, you needed to find ways to train harder by using methods such as forced reps, rest pause reps, and/or negative reps. If you still failed to grow, the likely solution was to cut back on the frequency of your workouts. If you were doing two workouts per week for each muscle group, try cutting back to one workout per week. You may even need to cut back to hitting each muscle group once every ten to fifteen days.

Mike Mentzer seemed like the most logical, smartest bodybuilder in the world. In my mind his way had to be the right way and the only way. That was the noise in my head that kept me from listening to my body. All I could focus on was intensity, intensity, intensity. It was all about pushing to failure and doing forced reps. No pain, no gain. It was a good strategy for a few weeks, but I couldn't hear my body when it started to tell me that it was growing tired and weak from those workouts.

At one point in the early 1980's, I had been training each muscle group three times per week. Then I read an article by Pete Grymkowski of Gold's gym. He wrote that it takes 72 hours for a muscle to recover after

a workout. Anything else was wrong. I immediately switched my training schedule to work each muscle group twice per week. Any time I thought about doing something different, the noise in my head from that article would yell back, "You must have seventy-two hours of rest between workouts. That's the only thing that will work." Somehow, I didn't stop to think that how often you train depends upon how many sets you do, how hard you do them, and what exercises are being performed. I later learned that if I only did a couple of work-sets for each muscle group, and I left at least a couple reps in the tank instead of training to failure, I had no problem recovering within 48 hours or less.

Not too long ago, Brad Schoenfeld did research that indicated that at least ten sets should be done for each muscle group over the course of a week in order to maximize muscle hypertrophy. That was the noise in my head that kept playing over and over again when determining how many sets I should do in my workouts. Did I listen to my body? No, I listened to what someone else found in their research on other people. Listening to smart people like Brad is a good thing, but not to the point of becoming oblivious to the results of my own training.

There have been many times when I sat down to plan out a training schedule. I would write out what I thought I should be doing for the next six weeks according to the knowledge I had accumulated to that point in time. However, once I started into my new training schedule, my body would begin to complain with fatigue. I would experience poor results because I was either training too hard, too long, or too often. Sometimes a novel training idea would take me the opposite direction and I didn't train hard enough, or long enough, or often enough. In my own case, when I didn't train often enough, I would start to feel out of shape when doing my workouts. The same workout would get harder instead of easier. If I didn't include enough volume or intensity, my body would go flat and I would stop getting a pump during my workouts. All of these things were factors that I ignored at some point in time, and it always backfired until I learned to correlate the feelings that accompanied productive workouts.

## Chapter 7

### Attitudes Can Affect How Your Body Feels

#### **Proper Motivation**

So far, all I have been discussing is how your body feels in relationship to your workouts. I haven't addressed feelings that stem from motivation or your attitude towards training. Attitude and motivation can play a huge role in how you interpret the way your body feels. It is possible to enjoy the results of the workouts while not enjoying the workouts themselves. This can easily have a negative effect on your energy level in regard to your workouts. The very fact that you don't want to do something can drain you of energy before you even start. In contrast, someone who loves to work out will be energized before they even start. The problem is that lack of motivation can ruin your objectivity when interpreting how your body feels, and so can super-hyper motivation.

#### **Lack of Motivation**

Those who lack motivation will generally look for training methods that provide the least amount of effort. The undermotivated lifter will tend to be overly aware of muscle soreness, fatigue, and any discomfort that occurs during a workout. They may feel that a moderately hard workout is very hard, and that leaving five reps in the tank is a high intensity set. The smallest bit of discomfort will seem like a traumatic experience and will be a major reason to skip a workout. These lifters cannot sense what their body is saying because they are hypersensitive to anything that takes effort, sweat, and discomfort.

#### **Hyper-Motivation**

On the other end of the spectrum are those who are hyper-motivated. These lifters will have a hard time leaving the gym. They are oblivious to fatigue and love the strain and discomfort of a hard workout. They may be dead dog-tired in between workouts, but they don't care, they will want to work out even if they are nowhere near the point of full recovery between workouts.

If you ask a hyper-motivated lifter whether a weight felt heavy, they will insist that it did not, even if they looked as though they were straining to lift it. They are driven, obsessed, and constantly overdoing it. Such lifters are deaf to what their bodies are telling them because of the obsessive thoughts and emotions that drive them past the point of sensible lifting.

#### **The Right Mindset**

Some of the best lifters are the best listeners because they have the right mindset. These lifters do not lack motivation. They are highly motivated, but they don't allow their motivation to turn into an ego fest or an obsession that leaves them deaf to what their bodies are trying to tell them. They can push when they need to push, and they can stop when their body tells them to stop. Such lifters know when to workout, and they know when to rest. They are in tune with their bodies, and they know how to flow with what their body wants.

## Chapter 8

### Learning From Successful Lifters

Of those who know how to listen to their bodies, I think Richard Hawthorne and Ed Coan are good examples. Ironically, when you listen to Richard and Ed describe their training philosophies, they seem to have opposite approaches to their workouts. Despite the differences in the way they verbalize their training philosophy, I think they have more in common than it may appear.

If you ask Ed Coan for training advice, he is likely to say that you need to develop a plan and stick with it. Ed is known for planning out entire training cycles that last fourteen weeks and doing the exact number of sets and reps that he planned for each exercise in every workout without an ounce of deviation from his plan. In contrast, if you ask Richard Hawthorne how much weight he is going to use for each set and how many sets he is going to do, he may say that he goes by instinct and feel from set to set. When adding weight from set to set, each set is a guide for how much weight and how many reps he will perform for his next set. He trusts that the best results will come when he lifts according to what his body is telling him to do as he monitors the way he feels throughout each workout.

Even though Richard seems to operate out of a different paradigm than Ed Coan, I believe they both listen to their bodies, and they are both experts at interpreting the feelings and the performance of their bodies. While it is true that Ed never deviates from his plan, the reason he can do this is because he learned to be so in tune with his body that he was able to formulate the exact plan that would work for his body. I doubt if he developed this ability overnight, but through trial and error, he gained enough experience to be able to understand how his body would respond throughout each part of a training cycle. The result was that he was able to pick the right amount of sets, reps, and weight for every exercise of every workout.

#### **Predictable Patterns**

I believe that both Ed Coan and Richard Hawthorne developed the ability to identify patterns of training that worked for them on a consistent basis. If you listen to them discuss their training, they will both emphasize the importance of a long-term perspective. Richard starts with a conditioning base by doing ten sets of ten reps for a few weeks and eventually proceeds to three sets of eight reps for a couple weeks, followed by three sets of six reps, and three sets of three reps. By repeating this process enough times and listening to his body throughout the process, he has learned how much volume, how much intensity, and how much weight to use, and has learned how often to train for consistent results.

In the same way, Ed Coan understands what type of training is necessary throughout each week of a fourteen week training cycle in order to be a little stronger than he was the previous fourteen week cycle. Neither Ed nor Richard try to break a personal record every week. They know that trying to speed up their progress by peaking too early will result in slower progress, or no progress. These two lifters are focused on the type of training it takes to be stronger when they finish their training cycles. They have achieved this by understanding how their workouts should feel, and how their bodies should feel during each week of their training cycles.



## Chapter 9

### A Long-Term Perspective

In the last chapter, I mentioned that both Ed Coan and Richard Hawthorne train with a long-term perspective in mind. I can't place enough emphasis on the importance of a long-term training perspective. Short-term progress and long-term progress feel very different. Short-term progress often feels more like a sprint where you are pushing very hard. Long-term progress may feel more like you are pacing yourself and that you are not pushing as hard. Pushing harder may lead to quicker progress for a short time, but it may also lead to a training plateau. Don't assume that the way your workouts feel when you are making rapid progress is the same way your workouts should feel when the goal is long-term progress.

Sometimes slow progress looks like no progress. But if you sit down and do the math, you will find that gaining five pounds of strength every month will lead to a 60 pound increase in strength in a year. In case you didn't know, 60 pounds per year is excellent progress if you can do it for a few years. Gaining five pounds of strength every six weeks will enable you to increase your lifts by almost 40 to 45 pounds in a year. Gaining five pounds of strength every eight weeks will cause you to be 30 pounds stronger within a year, and gaining five pounds of strength every twelve weeks will lead to a 20 pound strength gain within a year.

Don't smirk with disdain at a 20 pound strength gain in a year as it will add up to 100 pounds if you can repeat it for five years. This is how Ed Coan gained for most of his career. He simply added five pounds to each training cycle which would be repeated every three months. He understood what training for consistent gains that occur little by little over the long-term should feel like.

## Chapter 10

### You Are An Individual

You are an individual and your training should be in accordance with your individual physiology. This requires listening to your body. You must learn to interpret the feelings within your body during your workouts and in between workouts, and you must be able to relate those feelings to the effect they have on measurable results; particularly size and strength.

In summary, there are basic feelings, senses, and concepts that every lifter or bodybuilder should be aware of in regard to their workouts. Some of these are listed below:

Learn to perform each exercise in a manner that causes you to feel a strong contraction in the part of the muscle you are targeting.

Be aware of how hard you can push yourself on each set in order to make progress. Some lifters should stop a set when they can no longer maintain a steady even rep pace. Others can train to failure on some of their sets. Of those who benefit from training to failure, some may be able to push to failure on some of their sets in every workout. Others should only push to failure once per week or once every other week. Let results be the guide.

Learn how many sets you can perform at full strength for each muscle group.

Learn whether or not you can benefit from training past the point of being at full strength. If you benefit from training past the point of being at full strength, you must learn how many sets you can perform in a weakened state for optimum results. Some lifters learn to determine this in terms of a specific number of sets, others learn to determine the optimum number of sets to perform by instinct or feel.

If you are trying to get a pump, learn how many sets it takes to get a pump. Once you have a pump, learn how many sets you can perform before your pump begins to dissipate. Train as long as your muscles stay fully pumped. Don't train so long that you start to lose your pump.

Learn what it feels like to be fully recovered between workouts, as this will tell you when to do the next workout and how many days per week you can train each muscle group for optimum results.

## Chapter 11

### Learning From Time And Experience

The best lifters and best bodybuilders often develop an instinctive feel for effective workouts. They can feel when they are doing an exercise in a manner that activates the target muscle. They can feel when they are using a proper lifting groove to lift the most weight. They instinctively know how hard to push each set, how many sets to perform, and how long to rest before they do another workout. Developing a feel for these things does not happen overnight, it comes with time and experience. The key to this is to learn how to tune-in to your body. You must be able to interpret what your body is feeling and know what a productive workout feels like. If you develop this ability, the byproduct will be progress.

The greatest hinderance to listening to your body often comes from having ideas drilled into your head. Those ideas may consist of believing that you must annihilate your muscles, or that you must perform a certain number of sets and reps. Starting out with a predetermined number of sets and reps is usually a good thing as long as it keeps working. However, there may come a point in time when you need to change, but it will be difficult to do so if there are ideas and numbers that are speaking so loud that they drown out your ability to hear what your own body is telling you.

If you are not making any progress, consider that it may be because you are bound to certain ideas and a certain number of sets, reps, and training days per week. I am challenging you to free yourself and think about basing your training on this simple concept; **listen to your body**. Learn how your workouts feel and how your body feels when you are experiencing measurable results. Apply the concepts in this book that you find useful and it will enhance your body awareness and training sense. My hope is that these concepts will help you to improve and bring you a step closer to your training goals. I wish you much success and the best of training.

## About The Author

Mark Sherwood is a long-time fitness enthusiast who has pursued weight training and other fitness activities for over thirty years. His educational and professional background include a B.S. degree as an exercise specialist in physical education from the University of Wisconsin Madison, and positions as a fitness instructor and physical education teacher.

One of Mark's passions is to distinguish between strength training concepts that are consistently effective as opposed to those that are effective for a short time period. Through his education, research, and personal trial and error, he has endeavored to gain the necessary knowledge to share effective training strategies with those who desire to maximize their training results.

Mark resides with his family in Southern California. For more training resources from Mark, you can visit [www.precisionpointtraining.com](http://www.precisionpointtraining.com). In addition, you can view more books on strength training that he has authored on the next page.

## Additional Resources

A Quick Guide To Strength

Beginning Strength Training

Boom!

Bottom Up Loading

Cluster Set Training

Easy Progression With Mini Sets

Force And Frequency Training

Fusion 3: Book 1

Giant Pyramid Training

High Frequency Strength Training

High Volume 5's

Heavy Frequency Training

Individualized Workouts For Hardgainers

Intensity Ratios

Marker Rep Training

Never Miss A Lift

Overcoming Strength Training Plateaus

Phase Potentiation

Quick Workouts For Quick Muscles

Rest-Pause Training

Short Cycle Mastery

Strength Challenge 20/20

Strength Training Capacity

Strength Training Thresholds

Strength To The Max

Strength To The Max And Beyond

The 1 x 100 Challenge

The High Frequency Training Pyramid

The Peak Strength Principle

The Redistribution Principle

12-10-8-6: A Workout Plan For Building Size And Strength

## References

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Richard Hawthorne: 3:45 to 4:45:

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Brad Schoenfeld and John Meadows: 4:57 to 6:27: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJXBqcdTPxl>

Ed Coan Jugglife: 9:37 to 14:00: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llVoRy7zPbg>