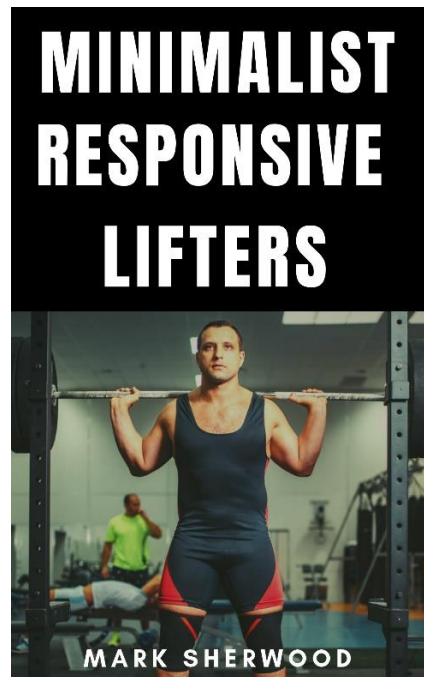


MINIMALIST RESPONSIVE LIFTERS



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Introduction

The minimalist responsive lifter is simply a lifter who responds well to a minimum amount of training. These lifters only need to do one or two sets per muscle group to stimulate strength gains, and they only need to train each muscle group once or twice per week. How do you know whether or not you are a minimalist responsive lifter? By doing a minimal amount of training to see if you respond to it.

It may also be that you are forced to do a minimum amount of training because you only have a minimum amount of time to train. Whether you are a minimalist lifter because it produces the best results, or you are a minimalist lifter because you only have a minimum amount of time to train, it is important to design your workouts correctly. If you do not, it will fail to produce the benefits that it can provide if implemented correctly.

The goal of this book is to help you understand the type of lifter who responds well to a minimal amount of training and to present workouts that will provide maximum results with a minimum amount of training.

Chapter 1

Attributes Of Minimalist Responsive Lifters

It would be dishonest to claim that a minimum amount of training is the best strategy for everyone. Most people will need more than a minimum amount of training to stimulate optimal results. However, it would also be dishonest not to admit that a small percentage of lifters have physiological attributes that will allow them to thrive on a minimum amount of training. Kirk Karwoski and Mark Chaillet were phenomenal powerlifters who are undeniable evidence that this is true. That being said, there are two major physical attributes that are essential in order for a lifter to be responsive to minimalist training. These attributes include the ability to quickly and easily stimulate strength and muscle size along with ability to easily retain gains when not working out.

A true minimalist responsive lifter must be able to elicit a training effect from a very small amount of training. Not everyone has this ability, but some lifters do. Adding more sets or workouts is a waste of time for these lifters as they do better when they do less.

A true minimalist must also have the fabulous ability to retain gains. This simply means that they retain gains for a longer time period than normal between workouts. Those who have excellent retention only need to work each muscle group once per week. In contrast, most lifters need to work each muscle group two or three times per week. There may also be some minimalist lifters who only need a small amount of training in each workout, but they aren't a pure minimalist who can get away with training each muscle group just once per week. These lifters may still be considered minimalists, but they need two workouts per week for each muscle group. This can be accomplished with a well organized workout schedule in which a minimum amount of training is performed over the course of two workouts per week.

Chapter 2

Exercises

One key to effective minimalist training is to understand how to work your entire body with a minimum amount of exercises. This can only be accomplished with proper exercise selection. Presses, pulls, and squats are all that are necessary to exercise your chest, back, legs, shoulders, arms and the support muscles of the core. Examples of pressing exercises, pulling exercises, and squatting exercises are listed below along with the muscles that they work.

Pressing Exercises

Pressing Exercises consist of bench presses, incline presses, and overhead presses

Muscles Worked By Pressing Exercises

Pressing exercises work chest muscles, shoulder muscles, and triceps muscles.

Pulling Exercises

Pulling exercises include: lat pulldowns, seated pulley rows, bent over barbell rows, T-bar rows, and deadlifts.

Muscles Worked by Pulling Exercises

Pulling exercises work back muscles, biceps muscles, and rear deltoid muscles.

Note that deadlifts not only work the back muscles, but they also work the legs.

Squats

Squats include barbell back squats, front squats, and belt squats.

Leg presses can also be substituted for squats.

Muscles Worked by Squats

Squats work the legs, glutes, and lower back muscles.

When selecting exercises for your workouts, you would select just one exercise from each category. In other words, you would pick just one pressing exercise, one pulling exercise, and one squatting exercise.

The Importance of Good Form

It is vitally important to perform each exercise with proper form. When exercises are performed correctly, the exercise stress is distributed properly to the muscles involved in the movement. In contrast, when

exercises are not performed correctly, some muscles are overstressed while other muscle groups are under-stressed. This results in muscle imbalances. Poor form can also place your body in awkward positions and create poor lifting leverages. All of these problems can lead to injury and inferior training results. Make sure you make every effort to perform each rep with the best form possible.

Chapter 3

Warm Up Sets And Work-Sets

When performing an exercise, you will be doing two types of sets which include:

1. Warm up sets
2. Work-sets

Warm up sets are easy sets of an exercise that prepare you for a single heavy work set of the same exercise. You should not push yourself with maximum effort, or even near maximum effort, when performing warm up sets. The hard work should be reserved for the work-set.

Warm up Sets

I recommend that you perform three or four warm up sets before doing a work-set. When performing the warm up sets, you do the same exercise that you are going to do for your work set. The only difference is that the warm up sets are done with lighter weights. For example, if you were doing squats, you would do four warm up sets as follows:

1st warm up set: Do 10 reps with an unloaded bar

2nd warm up set: Do 5 reps with 30% of the weight you are going to use for your work-set

3rd warm up set: Do 5 reps with 60% of the weight you are going to use for your work-set

4th warm up set: Do 2 reps with 80% of the weight you are going to use for your work-set

Short Rest Between Warm up Sets

You do not need to rest long between warm up sets. Many of you will only need to rest long enough to change the weight and position your body correctly for the next warm up set, however, if you feel like you are developing fatigue while warming up, rest longer between sets.

Rest 2 Minutes Before Your Work-Set

After your last warm up set, rest about 2 minutes before doing your work-set.

Do 1 Work-Set

Your work-set should be a single set that is performed as follows:

Do 1 hard set of 5 to 10 reps.

How Hard To Push Your Work-Sets

There are three types of lifters when it comes to how hard they push themselves on their work-sets with minimalist training:

1. Some lifters never max out on weight or reps, but stop 1 to 2 reps short of failure.

2. Some lifters go for max reps in some of their workouts, but not every workout. For example, they may stop 2 reps short of failure the first week, then add a little weight the next week and stop 1 rep short of failure the second week. They add a little weight again and push all the way to failure the third week.
3. Some lifters must push to failure on every work-set every week. This is the only way they can stimulate strength and size with a minimum amount of training.

An Individual Matter

When considering the three types of lifters discussed above, the exact amount of effort that works best for you when performing your work-sets is an individual matter. The only way you can determine whether you are the first, second, or third type of lifter is through trial and error.

Some lifters have a favorite amount of reps that they find works best and stick with the same amount of reps every workout. For example, there are some trainers and lifters who swear by 5 reps and do 5 reps each workout because they believe that it produces the best results. Others prefer 6 reps or 8 reps, or some other amount of reps. If you find that a certain number of reps works best, go ahead and repeat it from workout to workout.

Many lifters add weight from week to week over a series of workouts. This addition of weight forces them to reduce the number of reps over time so that they end up using a variety of different reps over a series of workouts. Lifters who add weight from week to week are using what is known as the progressive overload principle. This will be discussed more in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Progressive Overload Principle

When designing a minimalist program, you may find it beneficial to incorporate the progressive overload principle into your training strategy.

Start With A Weight That Allows 10 Reps

The simplest way to utilize the progressive overload principle is to start with a weight that allows 10 reps.

Add 5 Pounds per Week to Your Lifts

After your first workout with 10 reps, you will start the process of progressive overload by adding 5 pounds to your lifts each week. Because of the fact that you are adding weight each week, the lifts will become more difficult and you will eventually be forced to only do 9 reps, then 8 reps, 7 reps, 6 reps, and finally 5 reps.

When to Start a New Progressive Overload Cycle

When you reach the point where you can only do 5 reps, start a new progressive overload cycle with 10 reps. If you are gaining a lot of strength throughout a cycle, it may take 18 weeks or more to transition from 10 reps to 5 reps. If you are not gaining as fast, the cycle will be shorter and it may only take 6 weeks to transition from 10 reps to 5 reps. Of course, the goal is to get stronger from one progressive overload cycle to the next. As long as you continue to gain strength, you will be able to repeat each successive cycle with more weight than the previous cycle.

Progressive Overload

You can also utilize the progressive overload principle with just one amount of reps. For example, if you prefer 5 reps per set, you can start out with a weight that is 10 to 15 pounds lighter than the heaviest weight you can lift for 5 reps. From there, you simply add 5 pounds per week while performing 5 reps in every workout. Your goal is to add weight in 5 pound increments until you break a record for the amount of weight that you can lift for 5 reps. This same strategy can be used with 6 reps, 8 reps, or any amount of reps that you prefer.

Progressive Overload is An Option

I should make it clear that you don't have to use a weekly progressive overload strategy in which you plan on adding 5 pounds every week, but it is an option that you can use if you want to as it works well for a lot of lifters. I must point out that some lifters prefer to train by instinct and adjust the weight according to how they feel from week to week. If they don't feel strong enough to add weight they don't. If they are feeling good, they may try to add weight or reps to their lifts.

Chapter 5

Train Each Muscle Group Once Per Week With 1 Workout

When organizing a minimalist training schedule, you must determine whether you respond better to working each muscle group once per week, or twice per week. This can only be determined through trial and error.

Training Each Muscle Group Once per Week

If you respond best when training each muscle group once per week, you have the choice of either doing one workout per week, or two workouts per week. Three options for doing one workout per week will be presented first on the next page. The first workout presented is the absolute minimum amount of work that you would do each week and consists of only two exercises per workout.

A Single Workout per Week Option 1 2 Exercises per Workout	
Squats or Deadlifts Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps	Bench Press Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps
Note: Alternate between squats one week, and deadlifts the next week	

A Single Workout per Week Option 2 3 Exercises per Workout		
Squats Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps	Bench Press Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps	Deadlifts Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps

A Single Workout per Week Option 3 3 Exercises per Workout		
Leg Press Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps	Incline Press Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps	Bent Over Barbell Rows Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps

20 to 30 Minutes per Workout

Don't forget to do 3 to 4 warm up sets for each exercise. When you add in the warm up sets to the workouts listed, you should be able to complete the workouts listed above in 20 to 30 minutes.

The next workouts presented are also for those who choose to work each muscle group just once per week. However, the exercises are divided into two workouts instead of doing them all in the same workout. These options are shown in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Train Each Muscle Group Once Per Week With 2 Workouts

The following workouts are based on training each muscle group once per week by doing two workouts per week.

2 Workouts per Week Option 1 One Exercise Each Workout	
Monday's Workout: Squat or Deadlift: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps	Thursday's Workout: Bench Press: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps
Note: Alternate between squats and deadlifts from week to week.	

2 Workouts per Week Option 2	
Monday's Workout: Squats: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps	Thursday's Workout: Bench Press: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Deadlifts: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps

2 Workouts per Week Option 3	
Monday's Workout: Leg Press: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps	Thursday's Workout: Incline Press: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Seated Pulley Rows: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps

10 to 20 Minutes per Workout

Don't forget to do warm up sets for each exercise. Even with warm up sets, it should only take 10 minutes or less to complete the workouts listed in conjunction with option 1. You should be able to complete the workouts listed for options two and three within 10 to 20 minutes of training.

Workout on Whatever Day You Want

I should also note that you don't have to do your workouts on Monday's and Thursdays as listed for the workout options. The Monday and Thursday schedule is just an example. You can also do your workouts on Tuesdays and Fridays, or Wednesdays and Saturdays. The most important thing is to try to get 72 to 96 hours of recovery time between workouts.

Chapter 7

Schedules For Training Each Muscle Group Twice Per Week

When training each muscle group twice per week, you have no option but to do two or three workouts per week, and you will need to do one to three exercises per workout. Two options for hitting each muscle group twice per week are presented first, followed by a three-day option.

2 Workouts per Week Option 1	
<p style="text-align: center;">Monday's Workout:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Squats: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Bench press; Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Lat Pull Downs: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday's Workout:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deadlifts: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Overhead press: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p>
<p>Notice that only two exercises are performed on Thursday's workout because deadlifts hit two muscle groups including both back and legs within the same exercise.</p>	

2 Workouts per Week Option 2	
<p style="text-align: center;">Monday's Workout:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Leg Press: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Incline Press: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Seated Pulley Rows: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday's Workout:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Squats: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Overhead Press: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps Bent Over Rows: Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p>

3 Workouts per Week		
Monday	Tuesday	Friday
<p style="text-align: center;">Squats Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Seated Pulley Rows Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Bench Press Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Deadlifts Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Overhead Press Do 1 set of 5 to 10 reps</p>

10 to 30 Minutes per Workout

When you include warm up sets for the workouts listed above:

Workouts consisting of just 1 exercise should take no more than 10 minutes,

Workouts consisting of 2 exercises should take no more than 20 minutes,

Workouts consisting of 3 exercises should take no more than 30 minutes.

Chapter 8

The Minimalist Option

Minimalist training is an option. It is only the best form of training if it proves to be the best form of training for your individual physiology. It may be that you are highly responsive to minimalist training, or that your schedule only allows for a short amount of training time each week. Whatever the case, if it is the best choice for your situation, you should use it. If it doesn't seem to work for you, there are many other types of training that you can try.

My hope is that the information in this book brings you a step closer to discovering the type of training that works best for the unique characteristics of your own body. Those who are willing to learn, experiment, and form an accurate interpretation of the results of their training are going to make the greatest progress in the end. Be patient, consistent, and systematic in your efforts, as these are the keys to maximizing your potential. 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. 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

Density Responsive Lifters

Developing A Feel For Effective Workouts

Easy Progression With Mini Sets

Force And Frequency Training

Frequency Responsive Lifters

Frequent Training Preparation

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