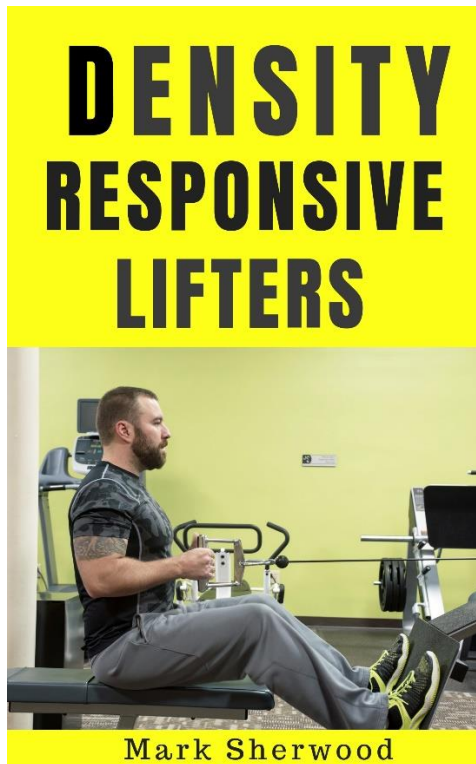


DENSITY RESPONSIVE LIFTERS



Mark Sherwood

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Density Responsive Lifters

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Introduction

What is a density responsive lifter? It is a lifter who experiences the best response to training when they train a muscle group for several sets with little rest between sets. It's not the same as high intensity training which is based on pushing to failure on each set. A high-density training session begins by training a muscle group with a set that is only moderately hard. However, instead of resting long enough to fully recover between sets, several consecutive sets are performed with only 10 to 30 seconds rest between sets. The short rest between sets will cause a steady increase in fatigue from set to set. The result is that each set becomes more difficult until the intensity of effort is high by the last set.

High density training means that several sets are condensed into a short amount of time. This strategy compresses both volume and intensity into brief workouts. The combination of volume and intensity are the primary training factors that trigger an increase in size and strength. Those who respond especially well to this type of training are density responsive lifters.

When Training Density Was King

Density training is nothing new and was probably at its height of popularity during the 1950's and 1960's. This was an era when many of the best bodybuilders came out of Vince's gym which was owned by a famous trainer named Vince Gironda. Not only was Vince a top trainer, he was a top bodybuilder who wanted the best results possible for both himself and those he trained.

Vince was very open minded about training and was willing to try just about anything, but at one point he became discouraged and bored with the long workouts that he thought were necessary for improvement. This drove him to try brief workouts in which he worked a muscle group with six to eight sets in a short amount of time. The short, rapid paced workouts proved to be superior to anything else he had tried. These were the same type of workouts that he taught to his students, many of whom became outstanding bodybuilders, including Larry Scott, the first Mr. Olympia. When you take into account the fact that Vince trained many of the best bodybuilders of the 1950's and 1960's, and when you consider that he was an outstanding bodybuilder himself, it's easy to understand why his methods were so popular during that time period.

As time progressed, Arnold Schwarzenegger became the central figure in bodybuilding in the early 1970's. Arnold favored high volume workouts consisting of tons of sets with a wide variety of exercises and rep ranges. Since Arnold was the best, his methods became exceedingly popular. Not long after Arnold's rise to bodybuilding stardom, Arthur Jones began to advertise his nautilus machines. He recommended that his machines be used in conjunction with brief high intensity workouts. His methodology seemed to be validated by the success of prominent bodybuilders who used his methods. This included Casey Viator and the Mentzer brothers who were among the top bodybuilders in the 1970's and early 1980's. The result was a huge increase in the popularity of high intensity training methods.

The point of all of this history is that the top lifters and bodybuilders of any era often have a great influence on the type of training that becomes popular. However, when you consider all of the champions and training methods that have come and gone, Vince's 8 x 8 routine remains a popular workout that is practiced by many, even to this day. Vince's high-density training methods have stood the test of time because they work; and they work especially well for those who are density responsive lifters.

Chapter 1

Guidelines For Basic High-Density Workouts

There are several ways to perform high density workouts. The most basic type of high-density workouts consist of the following guidelines:

- Select just one exercise per muscle group.
- Your workouts should consist of one of the following four routines:
 - 6 sets of 6 reps for each exercise. Use about 60% to 65% of your single rep max.
 - 7 sets of 7 reps for each exercise. Use about 55% to 60% of your single rep max.
 - 8 sets of 8 reps for each exercise. Use about 50% to 55% of your single rep max.
 - 10 sets of 10 reps for each exercise. Use 40% to 50% of your single rep max.
- Work each muscle group 2 to 3 times per week.
- Split the muscle groups of your body into separate workouts.
- Use the same weight for each set of the same exercise.
- Rest 10 to 30 seconds between each set.
- Adjust your weights if needed so that you can maintain a steady even rep pace for every rep of every set except for the last rep of the last one or two sets. The last rep of the last one or two sets are allowed to slow down.
- Increase your poundages when you gain enough strength to maintain a steady even rep pace for every rep of every set.

Chapter 2

Exercise Selection

One Exercise per Muscle Group

Basic high density workouts are designed to be simple in terms of exercise selection as only one exercise per muscle group should be performed. You can change exercises for each muscle group from workout to workout, but do not change exercises within a workout for a basic high-density workout. The exercise selection should consist of basic exercises listed below:

Exercises For Major Muscle Groups		
Leg Exercises Squats Leg Press Front Squats Goblet Squats Hack squats Belt Squats	Back Exercises Barbell rows Seated Pulley Rows Seated Machine Rows T-bar rows Lat pulldowns Deadlifts	Chest Exercises Bench Press Incline Press Dips Note: Presses can be done with barbells, dumbbells, or machines.

Exercises For Small Muscle Groups		
Shoulder Exercises Overhead Press DB Lateral Raises Machine Lateral Raises Note: Overhead presses can be done with barbells, dumbbells, or machines.	Arms Biceps Exercises Any form of curls with barbells, dumbbells, or machines Triceps Exercises Any form of triceps extensions with barbells, dumbbells or machines	Calves and Abdominals Calf exercises Any calf raise exercise Ab Exercises Curl ups Reverse curl ups Crunches Planks

Chapter 3

Split Workouts

Most lifters who perform high density workouts split the muscle groups of their body's up into different workouts. Each muscle group is trained two to three times per week according to the number of workouts per week that works best in your own experience.

The way you divide your workouts up is an individual matter and some options are listed below:

Option 1

Alternate upper body workouts with leg workouts

Option 2

Train chest, back and shoulders on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Train arms and legs on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Option 3

Train chest, shoulders, and triceps on Mondays and Thursdays;

Train back, biceps, and abs on Tuesdays and Fridays

Train legs on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Option 4

Train chest and back on Mondays and Thursdays

Train shoulders and arms on Tuesdays and Fridays

Train legs and abs on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Chapter 4

Selecting The Correct Weight

Use The Same Weight For Each Set

Basic high-density workouts should be simple. This is true in terms of the exercise selection, and it is also true in terms of the amount of weight that you use. Just as you choose only one exercise for a muscle group, you should also choose just one amount of weight for each set of the same exercise. To put it another way, make sure you use the same weight for each set of the same exercise.

The smallest number of sets and reps that you have the option of doing is 6 sets of 6 reps for each exercise. The greatest number of sets and reps that you have the option of doing is 10 sets of 10 reps for each exercise. With this in mind, you must adjust the weight accordingly. The more sets and reps you perform, the less weight you should use. In contrast, if you don't do as many sets and reps, you won't develop as much fatigue and you will be able to use more weight.

The general amount of weight that you use will vary according to the workout you choose. The amount of weight is also based on a percentage of your single rep max, which is the maximum weight that you can perform for one rep for the exercise selected. These percentages are listed below for each workout:

Use about 60% to 65% of your single rep max for the 6 sets of 6 reps workout

Use about 55% to 60% of your single rep max for the 7 sets of 7 reps workout.

Use about 50% to 55% of your single rep max for the 8 sets of 8 reps workout.

Use 40% to 50% of your single rep max for the 10 sets of 10 reps workout.

Adjust The weight If Necessary

You may need to adjust the recommended weights so that they provide the right amount of challenge. If you finish your last set and the last set felt easy to complete, you need to increase the weight until it is more challenging. In contrast, if you can't complete the amount of required sets and reps when moving rapidly from set to set, you need to decrease the amount of weight.

The Ideal Amount of Weight

The ideal amount of weight will allow you to maintain a steady even rep pace for every rep of every set except for the last rep of the last one or two sets.

When To Add Weight

If you are forced to slow down on the last rep of the last one or two sets, your goal is to gain enough strength to make it through every rep of every set using a steady even rep pace. Once this is achieved, you can add five pounds to your lifts.

Chapter 5

Rapid Pace Is A Must

10 to 30 Seconds Rest Between Sets

You must know that the short rest between sets will force you to use weights that are only moderately heavy. When using short rests between sets, you won't be able to use as much weight as you can when resting longer between sets. If you try to lift heavy, you will never be able to do the required number of reps that you are to perform for each set unless you do a slow workout. Density workouts are not slow workouts. You must keep the muscle under stress without letting it recover between sets to get the intended effect of density training. This effect can only be accomplished by keeping the rest between sets to only 10 to 30 seconds.

The Workout Starts Easy and Finishes Hard

Many lifters will start out feeling as though the weights are too light when performing the first set of an exercise. Don't be confused by this as the first set is supposed to be fairly easy, however, if you keep repeating sets at a rapid pace, the sets will get harder and harder until the last couple of sets will feel much more difficult.

Chapter 6

Choosing The Best Workout For Yourself

Up to this point, four workouts have been presented consisting of:

6 sets x 6 reps

7 sets x 7 reps

8 sets x 8 reps

10 sets x 10 reps

The reason four workouts have been presented is to provide different amounts of sets and reps to accommodate the differences in different lifters. Some lifters will respond better to 6 sets of 6 reps while others will respond better to 10 sets of 10 reps. Probably the majority of lifters fit somewhere in between and will find that either 7 sets of 7 reps, or 8 sets of 8 reps works best. The only way to know which amount of sets and reps works best is to try them out. You may find that a combination of workouts works best. For example, you may find that 6 sets of 6 reps works best, but it works even better if you include a workout consisting of 8 sets of 8 reps every third or fourth workout. You may also prefer switching back and forth between 6 sets of 6 reps and 8 sets of 8 reps from workout to workout.

Linear Blocks

Some lifters may find success by organizing the workouts into linear blocks by performing 10 sets of 10 reps for a week, followed by 8 sets of 8 reps the second week, 7 sets of 7 reps the third week, and 6 sets of 6 reps the fourth week.

Weekly Undulation

A final option presented in this book is a two week undulation scheme as follows:

Week 1

Day 1: 10 sets of 10 reps

Day 2: 8 sets of 8 reps

Day 3: 7 sets of 7 reps

Week 2

Day 1: 8 sets of 8 reps

Day 2: 7 sets of 7 reps

Day 3: 6 sets of 6 reps

Chapter 7

Compound Sets

Simple density workouts are effective, but you can increase the complexity of your workouts if you choose to do so. This can be done with compound sets. A compound set is actually two sets consisting of two different exercises for the same muscle group. The two exercises are performed back to back with no rest between sets. Every time the same two exercises are repeated back to back with no rest between sets, it counts as one compound set. While you do not rest between the two sets that make up a compound set, you do rest approximately one minute between each compound set of two exercises. I recommend 8 reps for each exercise. When the exercises are performed back to back, you will be doing 16 total reps.

Many people are familiar with the term super-sets. Super-sets are usually done for opposing muscle groups. For instance, if you do a set of bench presses for your chest and immediately follow it with a set of rows for your back muscles, you are doing a super-set. Some lifters refer to any two exercises that are done back to back with no rest between sets as super-sets, even if the two exercises are done for the same muscle group. However, in order to clarify the exact meaning of a compound set as presented in this book, a compound set will always refer to two different exercises for the same muscle group, and the exercises must be done back to back with no rest between sets.

Examples of Compound Sets for Chest Muscles:

Option 1

1 set of bench presses followed immediately by 1 set of wide grip dips.

Option 2

1 set of bench presses followed immediately by 1 set of DB incline presses

Option 3

1 set of DB bench presses followed immediately by 1 set of barbell bench presses.

Option 4

1 set of DB flies followed immediately by 1 set of incline presses.

Examples of Compound Sets for Back Muscles

Option 1

1 set of lat pulldowns followed immediately by 1 set of pulley rows

Option 2

1 set of deadlifts followed immediately by 1 set of lat pulldowns

Option 3

1 set of T-bar rows followed immediately by 1 set of lat pulldowns

Option 4

1 set of hyperextensions followed immediately by 1 set of deadlifts

Examples of Compound Sets for Leg Muscles

Option 1

1 set of leg presses followed immediately by 1 set of hack squats

Option 2

1 set of leg extensions followed immediately by 1 set of leg presses

Option 3

1 set of leg curls followed immediately by 1 set of squats

Option 4

1 set of goblet squats followed immediately by 1 set of sumo squats

Examples of Compound Sets for the Deltoid Muscles of the Shoulders

Option 1

1 set of DB lateral raises followed immediately by 1 set of overhead presses

Option 2

1 set of bent over lateral raises followed by 1 set of upright rows

Option 3

1 set of upright rows followed immediately by 1 set of overhead presses

Examples of Compound Sets for Biceps

Option 1

1 set of seated incline DB curls followed immediately by 1 set of preacher curls

Option 2

1 set of barbell curls followed immediately by 1 set of concentration curls

Option 3

1 set of standing cable curls followed immediately by 1 set of seated incline curls

Examples of Compound Sets for Triceps

Option 1

1 set of cable press-downs followed immediately by 1 set of lying triceps extensions with DB.

Option 2

1 set of narrow grip dips followed immediately by 1 set of seated overhead DB extensions

Option 3

1 set of pushups with elbows in, followed immediately by 1 set of DB kickbacks

Example of a Compound Set for Calves

1 set of standing calf raises followed immediately by 1 set of seated calf raises

Example of a Compound Set for Abs

1 set of curl ups followed immediately by 1 set of planks

All of the options for compound sets are just that, they are options. You can use them or create your own compound set of two exercises for the same muscle group.

Chapter 8

Workouts With Compound Sets

How Many Compound Sets per Muscle Group?

If you choose to incorporate compound sets into your training, you must do so within the context of your own capacities. The smallest number of compound sets that I would recommend for a muscle group would be 2 which would actually amount to 4 total sets. The majority of people will probably benefit most from doing 3 or 4 compound sets per muscle group. This would be the equivalent of 6 to 8 total sets for each muscle group. Some people can benefit from doing even more, but do not assume that more is better. More is not always better in weight training as the right amount is best, and the right amount varies from person to person. The amount you choose should be based on what you find produces the best results.

8 Reps per Set for an Exercise

When considering how many reps to perform for each exercise within a compound set, I recommend you perform 8 reps. This is not a hard-fast rule and you can adjust the number of reps if you experience better results by doing more or less reps.

1 Minute Rest Between Compound Sets

Remember that a very important aspect of compound sets is that two exercises are to be performed back to back with no rest between sets. Once you have completed a compound set, rest 1 minute before doing another compound set. If you follow these instructions, you should be able to train a muscle group with three to four compound sets in 5 to 7 minutes. The workouts are fast and should produce a substantial amount of fatigue to trigger an increase in size and strength.

Amount of Weight

You must understand that when you perform compound sets, you can use a substantial amount of weight for your first exercise. However, when you immediately start into your second exercise, you will already be fatigued from the first exercise. This means that you may only be able to use half of the amount of weight that you would normally use if you weren't fatigued. Make sure you select a weight that will allow you to complete the desired number of reps for your second exercise.

The amount of weight that you choose for your exercises should stay the same while working a given muscle group. Whatever weights you choose for the two exercises that you perform for your first compound set should be the same weights that you finish with for your last compound set, and as stated earlier, I recommend 3 to 4 compound sets.

The weight selection should allow you to complete the amount of reps that you have planned on performing for each set. Ideally, the amount of weight you select should also allow you to maintain a steady even rep pace for each rep of each set until you reach your last one or two compound sets. You may be forced to decrease your rep speed for the last rep of each exercise when you reach your last one or two compound sets. Your goal is then to gain enough strength to make it through each compound set using a steady even rep pace. Once you have accomplished this, you can increase the weight by 5 pounds.

Hit Each Muscle Twice per Week

Since compound sets produce a substantial amount of fatigue, many lifters need 72 hours of rest between workouts for the same muscle group. This amounts to training each muscle group twice per week. Since recovery varies from person to person, the recommendation for 72 hours of rest between workouts for the same muscle group can be adjusted according to what produces the best results. You may experience better results when training each muscle group three times per week, or just once per week. Always let results be your guide.

Sample Workout

In order to have a clear picture of how to set up a high-density training program, a sample schedule of workouts based on compound sets is listed below:

Mondays and Thursdays

Chest Muscles

Incline DB press followed immediately by wide grip dips. Do 4 compound sets

Back Muscles

Bent over barbell rows followed immediately by Lat pulldowns. Do 4 compound sets

Tuesdays and Fridays

Deltoid Muscles

DB lateral raises followed immediately by upright rows. Do 3 compound sets

Biceps

Seated incline curls followed immediately by preacher curls. Do 2 to 3 compound sets

Triceps

Pulley press-downs followed immediately by narrow grip dips. Do 2 to 3 compound sets

Wednesdays and Saturdays

Legs

Goblet squats followed immediately by leg presses. Do 4 compound sets

Calves

Seated calf raises followed immediately by standing calf raises. Do 4 compound sets

Abs

Curl ups followed immediately by 30 second planks. Do 4 compound sets

Adjustments

Of course, the workouts listed are only examples and should be adjusted to your capacities in terms of the number of sets, reps, weight, and frequency. In other words, make adjustments if necessary to optimize the workouts for your individual body.

Chapter 9

The High Density Option

High Density workouts are just one training option and will work especially well for density responsive lifters. If you respond well to high density workouts, keep doing them. If you don't, it may mean that you need to make adjustments to the high-density workouts, or it may mean that you would benefit more from a different type of training. Many lifters never take the time to investigate different types of training in order to truly figure out the optimum type of training for their own physiological make up.

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

Developing A Feel For Effective Workouts

Easy Progression With Mini Sets

Force And Frequency Training

Frequent Training Preparation

Frequency Responsive Lifters

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