

BODY PART TRAINING FREQUENCY

1. Strategy Summary

- Train each muscle 1.5-3 times a week, or once every 2-5 days.

2. Barebones Bullets

Bodybuilding body part splits	Natural physique training	Sport specific training
1x per week	1.5-3x per week	5-7x per week
9-20+ sets per body part	3-6 sets per body part	Various

*For the fastest and most efficient results, challenge and overload each muscle group as frequently as possible while still providing enough time between workouts to allow for optimal recovery and development.

*Most natural athletes looking to maximize lean muscle growth should train each muscle group more frequently than once a week.

*Training is the stimulus that elevates muscle protein synthesis. These rates can be elevated for 24-72 hours following an intense training session.

*You should hit each muscle group again as soon as it has recovered. Given that full recovery is accounted for, more frequent stimuli will lead to faster progress, or better maintenance of gains.

*Physique-enhancing drugs artificially elevate protein synthesis. So many bodybuilders can blast a body part just once a week, be done with it, and make massive progress. Most naturals need more frequent stimuli to maximize gains.

*On the flipside of the frequency coin, many gung-ho athletes assume that if a moderate amount of exercise is good, more is always better. The problem with that mindset is that there comes a point of diminishing returns.

*Natural training cycle = Stimulus (strength training) – Recovery (protein synthesis, glycogen restoration) – Adaptation (muscle growth).

*Training is only the initial stimulus for your body to undergo physical change. You actually build muscle, burn fat, and alter your physical appearance via all of the metabolic, hormonal, and physiological processes that happen IN BETWEEN training sessions.

*If you train too frequently, your body ends up in a constant catabolic, broken down, energy-depleted state. You never complete the full recovery, adaptation, and growth cycle.

*You are also predisposing yourself to training overuse injuries = traumatic acute injuries and/or chronic joint pain.

3. Cool Quotes

Most muscles need 72 hours to fully recuperate. Better to undertrain than overtrain...Remember, it takes 72 hours to rebuild tissue after this type of workout. Again, I repeat. There is a fine dividing line between enough work and too much work.. Top physique stars take maximum workouts every workout. But they work each muscle only twice a week. Even with their superior metabolism, they still need 72 hours recuperation. Take heed that workouts tear down tissue. Rest builds it. -- Vince Gironda

"How many days after a workout does a muscle reach its optimum benefit?" This is an important question. If the answer is "two days" or "three days", it means that by the fourth day, we've begun to de-condition. Nothing stays the same; we are always in a constant state of either building up or breaking down. Therefore, the longer we wait - after the peak time of optimum benefit - the more we slide backward toward our starting point...The ideal situation, therefore, would be to stimulate a muscle again right at the point of "peak benefit", and send that muscle's growth process upward again, before it starts to slide back down. If we wait a day or two (or more) beyond that, we're likely losing efficiency. It's like taking two steps forward, one step backward, etc. It would be much better to go two steps forward, and then another two steps forward. - Doug Brignole

4. Research & Resources

Wernbom, et al. **The Influence of Frequency, Intensity, Volume and Mode of Strength Training on Whole Muscle Cross-Sectional Area in Humans.** Sports Med 2007; 37 (3): 225-264

The results of Vikne et al and Wirth et al. are remarkably similar despite using different muscle groups and training modes. In both reports, two and three sessions per week yielded almost twice the increase in muscle CSA when compared with one session, with no apparent further advantage for three versus two sessions. This seems logical in view of the typical pattern of changes in muscle protein synthesis after a resistance training session, with peak synthesis rates observed between 3 and 24 hours, and elevated rates sometimes lasting between 48 and 72 hours after exercise.