

The 28 Day Chest Explosion Program

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INTRODUCTION

When you're looking for the fastest muscle growth in a particular area, you need to take a specialized approach. After you train a muscle group, your rate of muscle protein synthesis and your levels of anabolic hormones shoot through the roof.

Awesome. Trouble is, this quickly dissipates and within 48 hours, your levels are almost back to baseline.

This is why full-body training is a better bodybuilding method than a lot of people give it credit for. The issue with full body training however, is unless you're a newbie you might not be able to get in enough volume and intensity each workout to stimulate maximum gains.

So a split routine seems like a better option, right?

Well, in a way. You can get in more volume and won't feel as fatigued during your workouts due to focusing on just one or two body parts, but on a traditional bodybuilding split, you'll only train a muscle once every five to seven days, meaning you're leaving a hell of a lot of that elevated muscle protein synthesis potential on the table.

You should instead opt for a specialization approach.

This means hammering your chest hard and heavy, three times per week. First though, let's get a bit of admin out of the way. Not to be the bringer of doom, but during a specialization approach, you won't add any size to the rest of your body.

Your chest is going to grow like a freaking weed and your shoulders and tris will get beefier too, but as for your quads, hams, back and biceps... they ain't going to grow much. Your focus will be on just maintaining them.

Why You Can't Grow Your Chest

Many factors play a role in deterring your natural arm growth. That being said, there are 3 deadly mistakes that keep most people far below their maximum potential.

1. Not training the accessory muscles

When it comes to training the chest, simply doing more sets and reps won't cut it. The problem? Most lifters are hitting the SAME parts of the chest over and over again while completely leaving out – or at least under-stimulating – other parts.

2. Forgetting about the mind-muscle connection

One of the biggest obstacles lifters have when trying to build lagging areas is a poor mind-muscle connection. Once you're past newbie gains, you'll have one hell of a time building your body until you "feel" the muscles working.

Arnold said that resistance training was more than just lifting a weight from point A to point B. In his words: "The weights are just a means to an end. How well you contract the muscles is what training is all about."

To maximize muscle development, he talked about developing a strong "mind-muscle connection" where he'd visualize the muscle being trained and feel it working through a complete range of motion during each rep.

While it may sound hokey, research shows that the mind-muscle connection can significantly improve muscle recruitment.

Researchers had a group of subjects perform two sets of lat pulldowns with only basic instruction.

Then, after a period of rest, the subjects performed a couple of additional sets, only this time they received instruction on how to emphasize the latissimus dorsi while de-emphasizing the biceps.

The results?

Muscle activity in the lats, as measured by EMG, was significantly increased in sets performed with a mind-muscle connection. In other words, simply concentrating on the target musculature resulted in greater activation of this muscle.

3. Not maximizing growth windows

The real 'secret' to muscle building lies in the ability to stimulate a muscle as often as it can take it – and adapt from that stimulation – giving you many more growth windows throughout the weeks, month and year.

He or she who can successfully stimulate a muscle, derive growth and then train it again, repeating the cycle the most often, will be the one who makes the quickest and most marked of gains.

Think about it.

The regular trainer will 'annihilate' each muscle once per week. That means that 'Mr. average' gym-goer will get a maximum of 52 possible growth events in an entire year.

Yet it won't actually equate to 52 growth events because that assumes that the trainer is training every single day/ week of the year. So once you take out holidays, birthdays, Christmas, family days and any other excuse, perhaps you're (somewhat generously) left with 48 training weeks, or 48 possible growth phases per year.

Now we're left assuming that we successfully stimulate growth in every session, which with current training protocols at least, we certainly don't. Take out those lacklustre days, or days when you're a bit tired, or hung-over, or rushed or whatever else can work to kill your intensity.

It's more common for most people to take note of a great workout – one where they really let rip, compared to a typical one. This means the great workouts are few and far between.

How many muscle building sessions are we left with? Well, that will depend on the trainer, but it's fair to assume that we're probably looking at 20 or less growth events per year. Is it any wonder that people aren't changing quickly?

I mean, how much real world muscle do we think they're stimulating per successful bout of growth?

Its microscopic!

So really, one of the biggest issues with normal training routines is the severe lack of stimulation, which is slightly ironic considering the amount of talk about 'over-training' which we hear in the mainstream media.

The 28 Day Chest Explosion Program

We will be splitting up your chest training into 3 different days, 48 hours apart.

Let's call them CX1, CX2 and CX3. Each day will have a different focus. Let's get into that now.

CX1 – Power/Activation Workout

Make this your first session of the week. The idea is to prime your body for the strength and hypertrophy sessions to come. I've found that by making the first weekly workout speed and power-based, clients perform better in the strength session a couple of days later than if they just go straight into a heavy, low-rep workout on Monday.

Start with some kind of activation move – a body-weight plyometric is ideal, so think regular clap push-ups, drop push-ups, or weighted plyo push-ups. Perform 4 to 6 sets of 2 to 3 reps (or as many as you need to feel like you're powerful and good to go) and focus on movement speed and explosiveness.

For your second exercise, go with a supra-maximal isometric exercise. This could be a hold with 100-120% of your 1 rep max, or a static press against pins in a power rack. Hit 5 to 6 sets of 10 to 20 seconds.

Perform a heavy partial exercise third. Five to six sets of three to five reps on board presses or pin presses would be ideal.

Finish with an isolation movement for 4 sets of 10.

The goal of this session is to move the bar quickly and explosively, while avoiding slow or grinding reps.

Exercise	Reps	Sets	Rest	Notes
Clap push up	3	4	15-30s	Make sure to really explode out of the push up to get the muscle firing
Bench Press	10-20s hold	5	1 min	100-120% 1RM done in a supra maximal hold style. Be careful with these.
Machine incline press	3-5	5	2 min	Done in a partials style. Not full reps.
Cable flye	10	4	1 min	Full, slow reps

CX2 – Strength Session

This is your heavy lifting session. Allow 48 hours after your activation session before hitting this.

Start with a bench press or a full range bench press variation such as Swiss bar presses, incline barbell presses, or presses with chains. Work up to one tough set of 3 to 6 reps, leaving one rep in the tank.

Next, hit an incline or decline dumbbell press for 3 sets of 6 to 8. Again, stop 1 to 2 reps short of failure on each set.

Throw in a weighted body-weight exercise next – either weighted dips, or a push-up variation such as decline push-ups, elevated push-ups or ring push-ups – for another 3 sets of 6 to 8.

Finish with 2 isolation moves, each for 3 sets of 8 to 10 reps.

Exercise	Reps	Sets	Rest	Notes
Incline bench press	6	3	2 min	Warm up properly, then perform 3 heavy sets.
Flat dumbbell bench press	6-8	3	2 min	Stop short of failure
Dips (weighted if possible)	6-8	3	2 min	
Cable Flyes	8-10	3	1 min	
Incline Chest flyes	8-10	3	1 min	

CX3 – Hypertrophy Session

The goal of this session is to get as much blood into the muscle as possible, which means higher reps, slower tempos, and shorter rest periods.

Kick off with flat barbell or dumbbell presses for 4 sets of 8 to 12. Move the weight fast on the way up, squeeze the peak contraction for 2 seconds, and then lower for a count of 2. Get a good stretch in the bottom position and then explode up again.

Your second and third exercises are a pre-exhaust superset, so prepare to be an equipment hog. Set up for some isolation work – cable crossovers, machine flyes, or dumbbell flyes work well – and perform a set of 10 to 12 reps using the same tempo suggested in the previous instruction.

Immediately on completion of the set, jump into a barbell or Smith incline press using a wide grip. Same tempo again, aiming to keep constant tension on your chest. Complete 4 sets total.

Drop sets on the chest press machine are next. Pick any style of machine you like and perform 2 triple drop sets. Start with a weight you can move for a good 8 to 10 reps.

Go to failure, then drop the weight by 20% and go to failure again. Drop the weight again by about 20% and rep out again. Rest 2 to 3 minutes, then go through a second triple drop. On completion of the last set, you can perform extra forced or assisted reps if you're training with a partner.

Finish with push-ups. Set a timer for 2 minutes and get as many reps as you can.

You'll probably find that to begin with, you may even need to drop to knee push-ups to get in more than just a handful of reps. As you progress week to week, either increase your reps or bump up the time.

Exercise	Reps	Sets	Rest	Notes
A1 - Flat bench press	8-12	4	1 min	controlled 2 second up, 2 seconds down.
B1 - dumbbell flye	8-12	4	none	Jump to B2 immediately after B1 completion
B2 - Incline press smith machine	8-12	4	2 min	Return to B1 after 2 min rest. Complete 4 rounds
Incline press machine	8-10 / failure / failure	2	3 min	Triple drop set. Go to failure, drop weight 20%. Go to failure again , drop weight 20%. Go to failure, rest and repeat.
Push ups	2 min max reps	1		Go to knee push ups to squeeze out more reps near the end

Everything Else

This is a chest specialization routine, but that doesn't mean you'll neglect your other body parts.

- Pick two other training days each week.
- Make one of these days a back and biceps workout (possibly with some shoulder work thrown in too if your delts aren't too beat from all the pressing work) and one a lower body day.
- Stick to mainly compound exercises and perform no more than five movements in each session.
- No exercises in your accessory workouts should be taken anywhere near failure. Going too hard in these sessions will impact your recovery, leading to sub-par chest growth.
- Stick to 3 to 4 sets of 6 to 10 reps on all exercises, leaving 1 to 2 reps in the tank on all sets.
- Don't aim to progress your lifts on these days – save your energy for the chest workouts.

28 Day Chest Explosion Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
CX1	Legs	CX2	Cardio/off	CX3	Back + Biceps	off
CX1	Legs	CX2	Cardio/off	CX3	Back + Biceps	off
CX1	Legs	CX2	Cardio/off	CX3	Back + Biceps	off
CX1	Legs	CX2	Cardio/off	CX3	Back + Biceps	off

Final Thoughts

Stubborn body parts are just part of the game. For some of us it's our biceps or calves, for others it's their chest.

The only step now is to put everything into action.

Without that, this system is useless.

So go now, take action.

After completing the four weeks, go back to a generic split or full-body style workout for two weeks and then move to a new routine. If you decide to run the chest specialization a second time, give it a good three to four months before you go again.

Once you see the results just four short weeks can give your chest, it'll be time to bring your other body parts up to the same standard.

To fitness, fortune and freedom,
Pete