

1st Place - RC26

Compound movements build the most muscle. Not only that, but they increase strength the fastest. And of course, they are brutal!

Introduction

Summer is almost over, and mass gaining season is right around the corner. Many of you might know by now that compounds are the real mass builders, and many bodybuilders swear by them. However, the exercises need to be performed correctly to obtain maximal gains.

I've put this article together to help you, the readers, understand the importance of compound workouts, and get you ready for the best mass gaining season of your life. So get the pen and paper out, and prepare to learn about the compound exercises, how to perform them, how to prevent injuries, the best all compound workout, and much more.

Workout:

What Is The Best Compound Workout? Be Specific.

Too many people train with a big ego, and decide to lift heavy with bad form. There are no positives to this, but many negatives, one being injuries. To help prevent this, I included descriptions on how to perform the compound exercises, which muscle they work, and variations.


Exercises:

Flat Bench Press:

Execution:

- Lie face up on a flat bench, with back slightly arched, buttocks on the bench, and feet flat on the floor.
- Grab the barbell with an overhand grip, slightly wider than shoulder width apart.
- Inhale and lower the bar to chest level, until elbows are parallel to the ground.
- Maintain control of the bar, and extend the arms back up while exhaling to end to movement.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Flat Bench Press.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [Real Player](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Pectoralis Major
- Pectoralis Minor
- Anterior Deltoid
- Triceps Brachii
- Serratus Anterior
- Coracobrachialis

Variations:


- Performing the exercise with elbows close to the body works the anterior deltoid to a greater degree.
- Using a [hands closer together](#) width shifts the work to the inner pecs, along with more triceps involvement.
- Using a [hands wider apart](#) width shifts the work to the outer pecs, with less triceps involvement.
- Perform the bench press on an inclined bench angled at 45-60 degrees, to work the upper pectorals more intensely. This variation is called the [Incline Bench Press](#).
- Perform the bench press on a declined bench angled at 20-40 degrees, to work the lower pectorals more intensely. This variation is called the [Decline Bench Press](#).
- To stretch the pectoralis muscles, use dumbbells on either a [flat](#), [incline](#), or [decline bench](#).

Squat:

Execution:

- Slide under the barbell and place it on the trapezius, slightly above the posterior deltoid. Grab the bar tightly with the hands, and look straight ahead.
- Inhale and contract the abdominal muscles to prevent the torso from collapsing forward, arch the back slightly, and remove the bar from the stand.
- Step back a few inches, place both feet slightly wider than shoulder width, and point toes slightly outward.
- Bend forward from the hips, and continue the movement until the thighs are slightly below parallel to the ground.
- Straighten the legs and lift the torso to the starting position, then exhale.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Squat.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [Real Player](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Quadriceps
- Glutes
- Adductors
- Hamstrings
- Erector Spinae
- Rectus Abdominis

Variations:

- Place [feet close together](#) to shift the work on the outer quads (Vastus Lateralis).
- Place [feet wide apart](#) to shift the work to the inner quads (Vastus Medialis), and adductors.
- Place the bar on the upper pectorals, and perform the squat to work the quadriceps more intensely. This variation is called the [Front Squat](#).


- [Dumbbells](#) can be used when performing the squat to warm-up the quadriceps muscles.

Deadlift:

Execution:

- Stand facing the barbell, legs shoulder width apart, abdominals contracted, and back slightly arched.
- Bend the knees until the thighs are parallel to the ground, and grab the bar using one overhand grip, and underhand grip.
- Inhale, lift the bar by straightening the legs, and then contract the back at the top portion of the movement.
- Exhale at the end of the movement.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Deadlift.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [Real Player](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Erector Spinae
- Trapezius
- Glutes
- Quadriceps
- Rectus Abdominis

Variations:

- Place feet close together, and keep the back straight to stretch the hamstrings. This variation is called the [Stiff-Legged Deadlift](#).
- Place feet wide apart to work the quadriceps more intensely. This variation is called the Sumo Deadlift.



 Click To Enlarge.

Sumo Deadlift.

Video: [WMV](#) (445 KB) [MPEG](#) (1.94 MB)


Clean & Press:

Execution:

- Stand facing the barbell, legs shoulder width apart, knees inside arms, and feet flat on the floor.

- Squat down, and fully extend the arms, then grab the bar with a pronated grip shoulder width apart distance.
- Begin the pull by extending the knees, moving the hips forward, raising the shoulders, and lifting the bar straight up, all in one movement.
- Thrust hips forward, and continue pulling until knees are under the bar.
- Move bar explosively by extending the knee, hip, and joint in a jumping movement, and pull the bar and high as possible while keeping it close to the body.
- Shrug the shoulders, and then exhale.
- Rotate elbows under the bar, and hold the bar across the front of the shoulders.
- Press the bar overhead, and then lower it slowly to the top of the thighs.
- Squat down toward the ground, and keep bar close to shins.
- Place bar on the ground.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Clean & Press.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [MPEG](#) - [Video iPod](#)

Muscles Worked:


- Deltoids
- Triceps Brachii
- Biceps Brachii
- Erector Spinae
- Hamstrings
- Glutes
- Calves
- Rectus Abdominis

Military Press:

Execution:

- Sit with the back straight, and hold the barbell with an overhand grip.
- Inhale, and extend the bar upward.
- Lower the bar back down, and exhale at the end of the movement.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Military Press.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [MPEG](#) - [Video iPod](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Anterior Deltoid
- Medial Deltoid
- Trapezius
- Upper Pectorals
- Triceps Brachii
- Serratus Anterior
- Supraspinatus

Variations:


- Perform the military press standing, and push up with the thighs on each repetition to make the exercise easier. This allows the use of heavier weights for mass purposes. This variation is called the [Push Press](#).
- [Dumbbells](#) can be used for a longer range of motion, and symmetry between the deltoids.

Bent Over Row:

Execution:

- Stand with legs slightly bent, and grab the barbell with an overhand grip slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Then bend at the back at about 45 degrees, and slightly arch the back.
- Inhale, and lift the bar up to the upper abdominals, or lower pectorals.
- Lower the bar back down, and exhale at the end of the movement.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Bent Over Row.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [Real Player](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Latissimus Dorsi
- Teres Major
- Posterior Deltoid
- Biceps Brachii
- Brachialis
- Brachioradialis
- Trapezius
- Rhomboids
- Erector Spinae
- Rectus Abdominis

Variations:


- [Dumbbells](#) can be used for a longer range of motion, and symmetry between the lats.

Upright Row:

Execution:

- Stand with the legs shoulder width apart, and grab the barbell with an overhand grip.
- Inhale, and pull the bar upward in front of the body by raising the elbows as high as possible, up to chin level.
- Exhale, and lower the bar back down.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Upright Barbell Row.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [Real Player](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Trapezius
- Deltoids
- Levator Scapula
- Biceps Brachii
- Brachialis
- Glutes
- Rectus Abdominis
- Erector Spinae

Variations:


- Using a hands close together grip works the trapezius to a greater degree.
- Using a hands wide apart grip works the deltoids to a greater degree.
- [Dumbbells](#) can be used for a longer range of motion, and symmetry between the traps, delts.

Pullover:

Execution:

- Grab the barbell with an overhand grip at a shoulder width apart distance, then lie on a flat bench, and extend the arms.
- Inhale, and expand the chest as much as possible, then lower the barbell behind the head while slightly bending the elbows.
- Bring the bar back up, and exhale once you've returned to the starting position.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Pullover.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [Real Player](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Pectoralis Major
- Pectoralis Minor
- Triceps Brachii
- Latissimus Dorsi
- Teres Major
- Rhomboids
- Serratus Anterior

Variations:

- [Dumbbells](#) can be used for a longer range of motion, and expansion in the rib cage.

Dip:**Execution:**

- Hang from parallel bars with arms fully extended.
- Inhale, and bend the elbows until chest reaches bar level.
- Extend elbows back up, and exhale.



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Dip.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [MPEG](#) - [Video iPod](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Pectoralis Major
- Triceps Brachii
- Anterior Deltoid
- Serratus Anterior
- Anconeus
- Brachialis

Variations:

- Lean chest forward to work the [pectorals](#) more intensely.
- Keep chest vertical to work the [triceps](#) more intensely.

Pull-Up:**Execution:**

- Hang from a bar with an overhand grip wider than shoulder width apart.
- Inhale, and pull chest up until it reaches the level of the bar.
- Lower body back down, and exhale at the end of the movement.



Click Image To Enlarge.

Pull-Up.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) - [MPEG](#) - [Video iPod](#)

Muscles Worked:

- Latissimus Dorsi
- Teres Major
- Trapezius
- Rhomboid Major
- Rhomboid Minor
- Biceps Brachii
- Brachialis
- Brachioradialis

Variations:

- Use an underhand grip to work the biceps to a greater degree.
- Place hands close together, or wide apart, to involve upper, lower, inner, and outer fibers of the lats.
- Beginners can use the [pull-down machine](#) to gain sufficient strength before trying the pullups.

📺 Cardio Exercises:

Running:

The best, and most popular type of cardio is running, which provides a full body cardiovascular workout.

Jumping Rope:

This type of cardio is often used by [MMA](#) (Mixed Martial Arts) fighters, and also trains your entire body.

📺 Tips:

Get A Training Partner:

I recommend you get a [training partner](#), for spotting purposes, and motivation. Although it's difficult to find a good one, below is a list of some traits you ought to look for.

- Dependable
- Similar Goals
- Similar Size
- Similar Strength
- Similar Training Experience
- Positive Attitude
- [Motivational](#)

- [Good Spotter](#)

Surely you won't find all these qualities in a training partner, but look for several of them to ensure you aren't making a mistake.

Warm-Up:


Before starting each of your workout sessions, warm-up up for five to ten minutes by running on a treadmill. Don't neglect this part of your routine, as it helps decrease the risk of [injury](#).

Stretch:

Always stretch five to ten minutes before, and after working out to decrease the risk of injury, and increase range of motion during training. Below is a list of stretches:

- Chest - [Chest And Front Of Shoulder Stretch](#)
- Shoulders - [One Handed Hang](#)
- Back - [Seated Or Standing Twist](#)
- Quadriceps - [Seated Butterfly Stretch](#)
- Hamstrings - [Seated Hamstring Stretch](#)
- Biceps - Doorway Stretch
- Triceps - One-Arm Triceps Stretch
- Wrist Flexors - Wrist Flexors Stretch
- Wrist Extensors - Wrist Extensors Stretch
- Calves - [The Stair Stretch](#)



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Doorway Stretch.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) (225 KB) - [MPEG](#) (1.7 MB) - [Video iPod](#) (228 KB)




 Click Image To Enlarge.

Triceps Stretch.

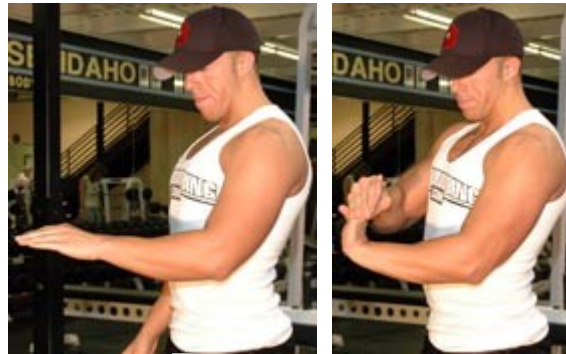
Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) (185 KB) - [MPEG](#) (1.5 MB) - [Video iPod](#) (208 KB)




 Click Image To Enlarge.

Wrist Flexors Stretch.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) (196 KB) - [MPEG](#) (1.4 MB) - [Video iPod](#) (199 KB)



 Click Image To Enlarge.

Wrist Extensor Stretch.

Video Guide: [Windows Media](#) (245 KB) - [MPEG](#) (1.7 MB) - [Video iPod](#) (233 KB)

Sets:

You will be using four sets per exercise, where the first set serves as a warm-up, and the following three are the muscle building sets.

Reps:

Rep ranges are the same for all exercises, but vary with each set. The first set, which is the warm-up, consists of fifteen reps. The second, and third sets consist of eight reps for muscle building, and the fourth set consists of six reps, which are also for muscular gains.

Rest:

Rest 60-90 seconds in between sets, to allow your muscles to fully recover, and slightly more in between exercises.

The Split:

- Monday - Workout A (Main Muscles Worked - Pecs, Triceps)
- Tuesday - Workout B (Main Muscles Worked - Quads, Hamstrings)
- Wednesday - Cardio
- Thursday - Workout C (Main Muscles Worked - Delts, Traps)
- Friday - Workout D (Main Muscle Worked - Lats, Lower Back)
- Saturday - Rest
- Sunday - Rest

Monday - Workout A (Main Muscles Worked - Pecs, Triceps):

Main Body Part	Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Pecs	Incline Barbell Bench Press	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Pecs	Flat Barbell Bench Press	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec

Pecs	Dip	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Pecs	Barbell Pullover	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec



[Click Here For A Printable Log Of Monday.](#)

Tuesday - Workout B (Main Muscles Worked - Quads, Hamstrings):

Main Body Part	Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Quads	Barbell Squats	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Quads	Front Barbell Squat	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Quads	Sumo Deadlift	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Hamstrings	Barbell Stiff-Legged Deadlift	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec



[Click Here For A Printable Log Of Tuesday.](#)

Wednesday - Cardio:

Run or jump rope for 30 to 60 minutes.

Thursday - Workout C (Main Muscles Worked - Delts, Traps):

Main Body Part	Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Delts	Barbell Military Press	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Delts	Barbell Upright Row	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Delts	Barbell Clean and Press	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec



[Click Here For A Printable Log Of Thursday.](#)

Friday - Workout D (Main Muscles Worked - Lats, Lower Back):

Main Body Part	Exercise	Sets	Reps	Rest
Lats	Pull-up	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Lats	Bent-Over Barbell Row	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec
Lower Back	Barbell Deadlift	4	15, 8, 8, 6	60-90 sec



[Click Here For A Printable Log Of Friday.](#)

Notes:

For maximal mass, and strength gains, I recommend you lift as heavy possible, as long as you use good form. Also, make sure you follow the rep ranges, because they will give you the most gains in muscle.



[Click Image To Enlarge.](#)

Ronnie Coleman.

As Mr. Olympia [Ronnie Coleman](#) says, "Everybody wants to be a bodybuilder, but don't nobody wanna lift no heavy ass weight!"

Diet/Nutrition

When it comes to building mass, we all know that training is only 50% of the equation, with nutrition being the other half. Follow the guidelines below for maximal gains.

- Eat every 3 to 4 hours.
- Drink 1 to 2 gallons of [water](#) per day.
- Consume 1 to 2 grams of [protein](#) per pound of bodyweight each day.
- Consume 2 to 4 grams of [carbs](#) per pound of bodyweight each day.
- Consume a minimal amount of [fat](#), no more than 75 to 100 grams per day.

PROTEIN/CARBS CALCULATOR

Weight	<input type="text"/>
Results	
Protein	
194-388	
grams	
Carbs	
388-776	
grams	

Supplementation

Supplements have become so popular, that almost everyone in the bodybuilding community uses them. Out of all the supplements, there are a few that stand out above the rest, and are guaranteed to be both safe, and effective. These blockbuster supplements are listed below:

- [Whey Protein](#) - [Top Sellers](#)
- [Creatine](#) - [Top Sellers](#)
- [Multivitamin](#) - [Top Sellers](#)

I recommend you buy these supplements and use them on a daily basis.

How Often?

How Often Should An All Compound Workout Be Performed?

🔗 Training Split:

Although we all have different goals, the four day training split above is effective for overall muscle development, and balance. However, depending on your goals, whether you're looking for muscle, or strength building, you can tweak the training split.

🔗 When To Train:

I recommend you train in the morning upon waking up, because your body is full of energy. Later on in the day, you eventually get tired, and that can affect your performance in the gym. Try training different times in the day, select your preference, and go with it.

🔗 Rest/Recuperation:

In the suggested workout above, there are three rest days in which you need to avoid performing high intensity activities, to ensure full recovery. Also, every eight to twelve weeks of training should be followed by a full week of rest, for further [recovery](#).

Benefits:

What Are The Benefits Of A Compound Workout?

➡ Increase Strength:

Exercises such as heavy bench presses, and squats, increase strength tremendously. These exercises also mimic real life movements, which can assist you in real life situations.

➡ Increase Muscle Mass:

Believe it or not, deadlifts work virtually every muscle in the body, and fifteen percent of upper growth comes from squats. Don't forget that squats are also the best lower body mass developer, and compound exercises build more mass than isolation. So if you're a beginner looking to get huge, rest assured that compound movements are your best bet.

Develop Stabilizer Muscles:

Ever wonder why so many people use machines? Well, the reason is they haven't developed stabilizer muscles needed to balance free weights, especially in heavy lifts. Separate yourself from the crowd, and in the long run, you'll stand out, and have the ability to lift massive poundages safely.

➡ Increase Core Strength:

Strengthening your body's core will not only assist in bodybuilding movements, but also in any physical activity.

➡ Increase Testosterone Production:

Testosterone is responsible for muscle growth, and many other vital components. Compound movements cause the body to increase testosterone production, which in turn boosts muscle mass, strength, and confidence.

➡ Strengthen Tendons:

An avulsion fracture, or the separation of the tendon from the bone, is a severe injury. Heavy training strengthens the attachment of the tendon to the bone, and reduces the risk of injury.

RELATED ARTICLE



Tendon & Ligament Training For Greater Gains!

Learn how to build great tendon and ligament strength and enhance power and overall.

[[Click here](#) to learn more.]

➡ Train More Than One Muscle Group At A Time:

Compound exercises allow you to train multiple muscle groups simultaneously. This cuts workout time in half, and makes training simpler.

➡ Reduce The Risk Of Overtraining:

Training with isolation exercises can quickly lead you into [overtraining](#), especially when training each muscle three times a week. Training with compound reduces the risk of overtraining, all the while increasing muscle gains.

➡ Reduce The Risk Of Muscle Atrophy:

Training with heavy weights makes the muscle cell walls grow thicker, and stronger, which reduces muscle atrophy.

➡ Train Your Cardiovascular System:

Compound exercises such as squats actually train your cardiovascular system, as well as packing on mass to your physique.

Negatives:

What Are The Negative Aspects Of A Compound Workout?

Injuries:

Pectoralis Major Tear:

When performing the bench press, there is a risk of tearing the tendon of the clavicular head of the pectoralis major. To prevent this, warm-up the pec muscles before attempting heavy bench presses, and perform the exercise slow and controlled. However if you tear a pec tendon, then it will need to be surgically reinserted onto the humerus, and following recovery, it's recommended you avoid heavy training.

Elbow Pain:

When performing bench presses, avoid locking the arms at the top of the movement, as it subjects the elbow to rubbing and microtrauma, which can lead to inflammation. All this leads to is elbow pain, and has become a common injury among trainees. If you begin experiencing elbow pain, rest for several days, and avoid performing exercises that involve arm extension.

Hamstrings Tear:

When performing the squat, the hamstrings group is stretched, and is at risk of tearing. To prevent this, warm-up the hamstrings, and perform specific stretching exercises that strengthen them. If you tear the hamstrings, after you recover, perform gentle stretches that target the muscle group to prevent future tears.

Biceps Brachii Tear:

This injury has become extremely common among both athletes, and bodybuilders who perform the deadlift. During the exercise, tension is placed on the long head of the biceps, which can cause a biceps tendon tear where the muscle inserts onto the humerus. To prevent this, use moderate weights, proper form. If you tear the biceps tendon, treat it immediately with surgery to prevent it from retracting.

Disc Herniation:

Incorrect back positioning during the squat, deadlift, or bent over row, can cause disc herniation from the rounding of the back. That's because the back of the disc expands and pinches the front of it. The intervertebral disc can crack, and compress on the spinal cord, or the roots of the spinal nerves. To prevent this, always use proper form, and follow the guidelines below.

Preventing Injuries:

Whenever heavy weights are used, it's imperative you create a "block."

1. Expand the chest, and hold a deep breath to prevent the torso from collapsing forward.
2. Contract the abdominals to support the core.
3. Arch the lower back by contracting the lumbar muscles.

Doing this prevents the rounding of the back, which can lead to serious injuries.

Injury Reduction Equipment:

4. [Lifting Gloves](#) - using these allows you to get a better grip when lifting heavy weights.
5. [Lifting Straps](#) - using these also provides better grip, especially with back exercises such as pullups, barbell rows, and deadlifts.
6. [Lifting Belt](#) - using a belt is recommended when performing heavy squats, and/or heavy deadlifts, as it decreases the risk of lower back injuries.

Compound Vs. Isolation:

How Does A Compound Workout Compare To An Isolation Workout?

Compound workouts are superior to isolation workouts in terms of muscle mass, and strength gains, but bodybuilding isn't just about building big muscles, as symmetry is just as important.

The advantage of isolation workouts is weak point training, which is essential when trying to build a balanced physique. For example, if your calves are lagging, there isn't much you can do with compound exercises to develop them, but with isolation, you can perform many types of calf raises. Then to further isolate the calves, you can point the toes inward to work the outer calves.

So as you can see, both compound, and isolation training is important, and depending on your goals, you can incorporate whichever you need to reach your goals. For maximum gains, I recommend you include more compound exercises than isolation, but don't neglect either.

Conclusion

Now that you know the importance of compound training, you can build more mass than ever before. I hope you took notes, because it's time to put down the pen, and paper, and begin your training.

Good luck!
Richard C.

References:

1. www.bodybuilding.com/fun/stretch.htm
2. www.bodybuilding.com/fun/bbinfo.php?page=AnatomyandExercises
3. Strength Training Anatomy Second Edition, By Frederic Delavier, Human Kinetics