

There are different methods of training your muscles and the differences can be seen in equipment that is used, in the length of training session, in the exercises or in the goals that one has set. There are methods to train your muscle endurance, maximum strength or to gain muscle mass. And of course, I am going to explain methods that are used in natural training, and without using any steroids or other medicines, because using steroids can damage your hormone production and overall health.

So, what is weight training? Weight training is type of strength training that is mainly used for developing strength, size, and endurance of skeletal muscles. It focuses on opposing gravity using your muscles through eccentric and concentric muscle contraction, and by using progressive overload. The weight that is used can be in form of a special equipment, or your own bodyweight. Weight training can be considered as a sport itself, but it is also a very important part of sports such as bodybuilding, powerlifting, CrossFit, javelin or hammer throw and many other sports.

Most people who come to the gym have a goal of gaining more muscles. I had the same goal when I started, but now my training methods have changed and now I am also concerned with gaining more strength. Basic rule to build big and muscular body is that you first apply some stress and after that you let it recover. Muscle tissue is built when you sleep, so it is very important to eat, and sleep well. Recovery is the most important aspect of training. But speaking of exercises, I will start by explaining two main terms, “reps” and “sets”. “Rep” stands for “repetitions”, and it is basically one complete motion of exercise, and “set” is amount of repetitions done in a row. These are basics that determine, whether you are training for strength, muscle size or muscle endurance. The more reps you have, the smaller weight you can lift, the more enduring your muscles become. Further infographic will explain this.

	Strength	Muscle growth (hypertrophy)	Muscle endurance
Reps	1-6	6-12	>12
Sets per exercise	3-5	3-5	2-3
Rest between sets	3-5 mins	2-3 mins	<2 mins

This rules that are shown in the infographic are working, but there is something that I would like to explain a bit. In the beginning I said that I will talk about natural training, and there are little differences in training methods when you use steroids. Most of the steroids are basically “helping” you to recover faster, and due this, you are available to lift more weight and do more reps in the same amount of time. I am saying this, because when you are reaching 12 reps in your set you will feel soreness and “pump” in your muscles. It is often considered that the soreness is important and it messages that your training was heavy enough. That is not completely true, because if you are feeling soreness constantly,

it means your rest time is too short. Constant soreness has a catabolic effect, which means that muscles are not actually building but they are breaking. But enough of theory let's move to the methods.

To develop strong and big muscles, you must apply some stress on them. Some basic movements that one should consider doing are: Bench press, Squat and Deadlift. All these movements are so called "compound exercises" because they work multiple muscle groups at the same time. These same movements are the ones used in powerlifting. Bench press builds chest, triceps and shoulders. Squat builds quadriceps, calves and glutes. Deadlift mainly builds glutes and lower back, but because of the way this exercise is performed, it activates most of your body parts. Other good exercises to train your muscles are dips, rows, pullups and many other "presses" and "lifts". Most of these exercises are done with dumbbells and barbells. To make dips and pullups harder, you can use belt that you hang some weight plates on. The opposite of compound exercises are isolating exercises. Isolating exercises train only one muscle group, and do not build muscle that effectively on their own, but they are good in the end of workout to concentrate the work on certain muscle.

Here is a list of good and commonly used compound exercises

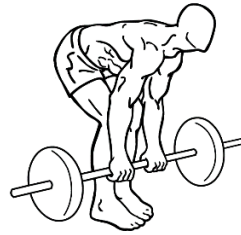
Name	Used muscles
Bench press (horizontal, incline and decline) with wide grip	Chest, shoulders, triceps
Overhead press	Shoulders, triceps
Dips	Chest, triceps
Squat	Quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, abs, upper back
Deadlift (Classic or Sumo)	Quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings, lower back, traps, abs
Bent-over Row	Lats, shoulders, forearms, biceps, spinal erectors,

And a list of good isolated exercises

Name:	Used muscles
Bicep curls	Bicep, forearm
French press	Triceps
Shoulder fly	Shoulders
Chest fly	Chest



Bench press



Deadlift



Squat

Now I will tell about my current training routine. I have been training over three years now, and during that time I have tried many different exercises and programmes. As many of beginners do, I also started training by doing only biceps and chest, which I don't recommend. Time after time, I started adding other muscles into the programme. For quite a long time, my rep range was around 10, and that meant that I was not able to lift that big of a weight. Last year my PE -teacher gave me a tip, that I should lower my rep range to 5-8, and take bigger weights. That is what I did, and now I can say that both my power and my muscle mass have increased. It also helped me to start eating more and better. I also left most of machine exercises, and now  $\approx 75\%$  of my exercises are done with free weights (bars, dumbbells etc.). I am also trying to add some classic moves done with kettlebell such as one hand press, swing and snatch. My programme currently features these moves:

Bench press
Incline dumbbell press
Incline barbell press
Horizontal dumbbell press
Chest crossover
Dumbbell row
Barbell bent-over row
Seated row
Lat pulldown
Bicep curl with EZ bar
Bicep curl with dumbbells
Hammer curls
Triceps dips with extra weight
French press
Bench press with narrow grip
Rope pulldown
Overhead press
Squat
Leg press
Deadlift (Classical and Sumo)

My training is split to 5 days:

Day 1: Arms

Day 2: Legs

Day 3: Chest + Back

Day 4: Arms

Day 5: Chest + Back

As I mentioned before, I have left most of exercises that are done with machines from my programme for couple of reasons. First reason is, that machines have isolated range of motion, which is good for the beginners, but due to the isolation all the stabilising muscles are deactivated and don't take part in movement at all. Basically, there's nothing bad in it but when one will move on to free weights, there is possibility of not being able to handle a bar or a dumbbell properly, which in a worst case can cause an injury. And the second reason is because even the best machines most of times have terrible angles and ranges of motion, that feel unnatural when performing an exercise. On the opposite, when you are using free weights, you can decide yourself at what angles you will be doing your exercise.

I perform 3-4 sets per each exercise, and I pick such weight so I can do at least 4 reps. Sometimes in certain movements I pick weight that I can do only 2-3 reps with, and that's enough for me because it develops strength very well, and even though you don't feel pump and soreness, it will still build your muscle mass a bit. Length of my workout is currently around 2 hours and 10 minutes, which can seem long but if consider that my rests between sets are up to five minutes, there is not that much of working time.

As a conclusion, the methods that you should use, depend on your goals and experience. If you want to build big muscles, do 6-10 reps per set and focus on the technique. If you want strength, do 1-6 reps. If you want to increase your muscle endurance, you should do up to 30 reps. Your rest should be long enough, so you are able to do next set with full power. When you become more experienced you can perform more complicated movements. Remember to drink enough water during the workout. And the main thing is to sleep well after training and having overall good recovery time.

Sources:

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