

TIME TO TRANSFORM

**A GUIDE TO
RESISTANCE
TRAINING**





INTRODUCTION

I am assuming you are reading this because you have reached a period in your life where you can reinvest some time back into you.

You are here because you have had enough of putting everyone and everything before you, and are now ready to start rebuilding your body confidence. You want to not only increase your overall strength but you most importantly want to wake up every morning and be proud of what you see in the mirror, if this is the case then you are in the right place.

In this eBook I will explain why resistance training is without doubt the most effective method of training for overall health as well as creating body composition change.

As you make your way through the book, you will learn exactly what happens to your body when you weight train regularly and how you can adapt your training to create different physiological results.

You might be reading this with some previous experience in the gym in which case some of the information may not be relevant but hopefully, you may find some of the information useful, which may change your approach in the gym or even the way you programme your training altogether.

If you are completely new to the gym then this is perfect as I have the opportunity to teach you the best approach so you do not pick up any bad habits.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Are Whey protein shakes like taking steroids?

Now I am not sure how common this belief is, but I remember my mum saying it when I was 16 and drinking weight gain shakes. It still makes me laugh because her best friend banned her son from drinking protein shakes with the same belief, mums!! The answer is NO protein shakes are not like taking steroids, in fact they are a super food as they contain the most complex variety of amino acids when compared to any other food type. So if your son is using protein shakes then don't worry, unless they are using it as meal replacement.

2. Training a muscle group for a whole hour is optimal, for example Monday = International Chest day.

So the 'bro split' as it is known has been the standard training split the world over for decades. This is where you pick a muscle (say chest) and pound that muscle for a full hour, you then don't train that muscle until the following Monday. Now as much as this gives you a great 'pump' research is now supporting that training a muscle twice a week at less intensity creates great results when it comes to building muscle.

3. Free weights are better than machines.

For anyone who has never stepped into a gym before, there are 2 different types of lifting methods available, fixed and free. A fixed resistance machine normally focuses on one muscle as you place load through that muscle within a fixed movement, these are your typical resistance machines. With free weights you require joint stability to stabilise either the dumbbell or the bar during lifting. This will activate more motor units within the muscle so you actually gain an increase in muscle recruitment with each rep. So the answer to the questions is yes, free weights are more effective than fixed machines when it comes to muscle activation. However if you are new to the gym then it is better to start with fixed resistance machines as you need to take things slowly, walk before you can run as they say. You will need time to get your body used to handling an increase in load. This gives both your muscles and your tendons/ligaments time to adapt, this is simply to prevent injury as you progress through your training.



PART ONE:

Why resistance training is the nuts!

We don't need to go far on social media before we find a video of someone pumping iron in the gym and trying to catch the right light on their sweat covered skin. It is not a coincidence that weight training has become so popular because it is quite simply the dog's nuts, due to the positive benefits it gives your body.

Now don't get me wrong, if you want to focus on improving your overall fitness then a variety of different training styles is optimal and I often talk about the importance of training diversity when it comes to fitness. But for improving both physical and mental health lifting weights is optimal.

Here are the main reason I love weight training and want the same for you:

REASON 1

1. Your focus is on the weight on the bar and not on your body!

Everyone is obsessed with body image! The average person spends over 2 hours a day scrolling through social media, admiring the perfect body's that roll past their gaze, it is no wonder this has a negative effect on their body confidence. For the majority of people body image is the main reason they start to take an interest in the gym. Being in this mindset could lead you to also becoming obsessed with burning calories and so you spend hours smashing the treadmill or rowing nowhere. However, after spending some time in the weights area, this mindset can start to shift as you suddenly find yourself becoming more interested in how much weight you can lift, as opposed to how much weight you can lose.

Don't get me wrong, when you first start lifting weights its tough, you feel weak and find a 16 year old girl in the squat rack lifting more weights than you. However, do not let this deter you from your objective, which is to go to bed a stronger version of yourself than when you woke up that morning. We hear lots of people talk about 'motivation' or a least waiting for a surge of 'motivation' before they can be bothered to get off the sofa. Motivation comes with time, before motivation comes discipline, that's dragging yourself to the gym as opposed to walking their willingly. I promise you, after just 2 weeks of lifting weights you are going to have more motivation to attend the gym than ever before. That's because unlike running, swimming or doing yoga, weight training gives you results very quickly. In just a couple of weeks you will start to lift more, your muscles will feel more toned and you will start to enjoy that sensation when you lift known as 'the pump' (where your muscles fill with blood and feel harder). This is the point where you become less focused on how much weight you can lose on the scales in 7 days and actually how much weight you can add to the bar in 7 days.

Allowing yourself to become more focused on performance based goals not only directly increases the intensity of your training, but also allows you to achieve the aesthetic goals more quickly. I hope you can see that this also a far mindset as your focus has shifted from a negative 'I hate myself' to a positive 'I wonder how much more I can lift today'.

This my friend is called progress!!

REASON 2

2. Being strong is propa cool!

I think this goes without saying, as a man it is impossible to watch the 'World's Strongest Man' and not be in awe of what those men can lift, I mean being able to deadlift a car, that's cool! But that's the elite, the best in the world, so as much as it is entertaining to watch, it is a little unachievable for the average man walking into the gym. So let's bring this back to you.

At some point in your life I am sure you have experienced what it feels like to be weak, this could be due to illness or injury. Over a period of time this creates muscle breakdown and a feeling of lethargy and weakness sets in. It sucks! During such a time it's hard not to reminisce about a time when you were in the gym pushing a new personal best, thinking back to when you last felt strong and powerful. The reason you reminisce about that time is because there is no better feeling than actively increasing your strength in the gym and feeling that gradual increase in power, it can become addictive.

My little boy Albie at the moment is obsessed with what he calls his 'super powers', he is of course talking about his marvel superheroes. Now he loves them because he sees them as powerful individuals who save people in trouble. As we all know Superheroes are capable individuals (the hulks his favourite) and they certainly look the part. We are genetically programmed to desire strength or at least admire its power, especially as a male as there is no characteristic more alpha than being the strongest man in the room.

That aside building your own strength is liberating, it is a key indicator that you are progressing as an individual both physically and mentally, if you feel strong and powerful on the outside, it will show on the inside. Suddenly you will feel more confident to face challenges in your life, challenges you previously would have avoided, this opens new doors of opportunity which previously would have remained closed.

For me it is one of the most powerful characteristics of regular weight training, mental strength is just as powerful as physical strength however now you can achieve both.

REASON 3

3. Reduces feelings of anxiety and depression.

This follows on from my previous point around how resistance training improves your mental strength as much as it does your physical.

It is no secret that a healthy body creates a healthy mind due to the increase in oxygen to the brain and the release of feel good hormones such as Dopamine, Serotonin and Endorphins. Regular resistance training will increase the production of all these 'feel good hormone's' so let's look at what they are:

Dopamine: Is directly referred to as the 'feel good hormone' as it works as a neurotransmitter and plays an important role in your bodies reward system. Dopamine is associated with pleasurable experiences along with learning and memory. That feeling of euphoria you get when you buy a new car, that's dopamine.

Serotonin: The hormone which helps regulate your mood, sleep, ability to learn as well as your memory. Serotonin plays a vital role in key aspects of your life. This means you are offering a more switched on version of yourself to the world when you adopt regular weight training into your weekly routine.

Endorphins: This hormone is a natural pain reliever which your body produces in response to pain or discomfort. This is why you can experience an endorphin high through resistance training as you are literally tearing your muscles. You also receive a similar endorphin release during sex and eating enjoyable food.

So how is that for a perk to resistance training, you can receive a similar endorphin release by lifting weights as you do when having sex! It is no wonder that regular weight training can have a profound effect on your mental health. With all these feel good hormones being produced each designed to lift your mood, improve your sleep and experience a feeling of enjoyment.

I can't think of a more potent prescription for anyone wanting to improve their mental health.



TERMINOLOGY

Now before we move onto the GOLDEN RULES of weight training which will help optimise your time spent in the gym, let's quickly run through some gym terminology:

REPS: The purposeful movement of a weight from one point to another. With each exercise you will typically do between 5-20 repetitions per set depending on your training programme.

SETS: The completion of a desired number of reps before resting. You will typically do between 3 and 5 sets per exercise.

LOAD: The amount of weight applied to a muscle through a movement.

REST: The time you relax before starting your next set.

VOLUME: The amount of time the muscle spends under tension compared to being at rest. You will typically rest for 1 minute between your sets unless you are doing a superset or a dropset.

INTENSITY: Refers to how hard the muscle is required to work. You can increase the intensity of your workout by increasing the load, the volume or both.

SUPERSET: A superset is one exercise followed immediately by another exercise without rest. A superset would typically work the same muscle or an opposing muscle during the second exercise.

TRISSET: A Triset is an exercise followed immediately by another 2 exercise's without rest. A triset would typically work the same muscle or an opposing muscle.

DROP SET: A drop set is when you achieve failure on an exercise and instead of resting you lighten the load for another 5-10 reps, you would normally have 3-4 drops before resting.



TERMINOLOGY

COMPOUND EXERCISE: A compound exercise is a multi-joint exercise (works multiple joints during each repetition). These would typically include Squat, Bench Press, Military Press, Deadlift, Clean and Press amongst others. These should form the foundations of your weight training programme.

TUT (TIME UNDER TENSION): Tut refers to the amount of time a muscle is under tension. You may complete 10 reps but the speed in which those reps are completed effect the intensity of the set. Increasing TUT will increase the intensity of the set.

ISOMETRIC: A contraction where the muscle is placed under tension but does not move, a good example of this would be a plank hold.

ISOTONIC: A contraction where the muscle is placed under tension through movement, a good example of this could be a bicep curl.

PROTEIN SYSNTHEIS: Is the process where amino acids and carbohydrates combine to repair muscular damage. When nutritionally supported the muscle will repair larger and denser so that it is able to cope with the same amount of load when applied again.

HYPERTROPHTY: The process whereby you actively strive to increase the size of your muscles through resistance training and dietary support. If hypertrophy is your training objective then you will need to constantly challenge the strength and endurance of the muscle to trigger consistent growth.

TONE: Muscle tone is where you increase the strength and density of the muscle fibres. Individuals looking to increase their muscle tone will follow a similar process to those looking to achieve hypertrophy, however the rep range will typically be higher.

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 1

Understand the concept of 'progressive overload'

If you have never attended a gym before or it has been a while since you lifted weights do not worry. In fact, as far as I am concerned this would be a good thing as I can teach you how to lift safely and effectively. So what do I mean when I say 'progressive overload'? Here is a definition of 'progressive overload' I found on google:

'Progressive overload is when you gradually increase the weight, frequency, or number of repetitions in your strength training routine'. Healthline.com

So why have I placed 'progressive overload' as my number 1 golden rule of weight training? Let me explain.

If you are new to the gym, you need to understand that there is a 'beginner's phase' of training you need to go through before you start pushing the boundaries of your strength and muscular endurance. You may well be naturally strong and feel confident in your abilities within the gym environment however what you are not aware of is your tendon strength, so it is advisable to adopt some good drills now to prevent injury later down the line. The good news for you is all my programmes available at www.JamesRobertson.fitness (with the exception of the 'Pure Strength' and 'MFR180' programmes) start off from a beginner level and so are a good way to get your body used to lifting. You need to give your body time to adapt to the fact you are now applying load to the joints, the muscles as well as the tendons. Jumping the gun too quickly and going straight in for your 10 rep max will put you out of action very quickly. Now your body is an incredible machine and adapts well to the environment it is placed into, so you will find that this 'beginners phase' of training becomes easy within just 2-4 weeks so this is where progressive overload comes in as the intensity of your training increases along with your development.

You see so many people in the gym who seem to be attending regularly however their physique never seems to change. This is caused for 2 reasons:

1. Poor nutrition and calorie management.
2. Not increasing the intensity of their training every 4-6 weeks.

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 1

Let's look at the fundamental mechanics of resistance training.

The process of lifting weights is simply a stimulus to create change within the muscle. When load is applied to a muscle through either an isometric or isotonic contraction micro tears occur within the muscle fibres due to the tension applied. Through the process of protein synthesis the muscle will repair larger and denser so that it is able to cope with that level of force when it is next applied. This means your muscle will soon increase in strength and so will no longer become challenged by the weight you are currently lifting. Increasing the load applied to the muscle is an easy way to progress your training and prevent plateau.

Make sure that the increase in load supports your training objective, you can use the following as a rough guide.

Now for the majority of us who are simply training to increase our overall strength, fitness and body confidence mixing up your training between different rep ranges is a progressive way to ensure constant overload is applied when training.

The above examples are simply a guide and muscle development only occurs when it is nutritionally supported with enough calories and a variety of different proteins.

Training Objective	Rep Range	Coaching Points
Increase strength	3-8 reps	Start off with a couple of warm up sets. Then focus on large compound exercises with the following number of reps per set, 8,5,5,3.
Increase muscle size	8-15 reps	You are focusing on pushing each muscle to failure when experienced enough to do so. Your objective is to apply load through a controlled rep range until the muscle can no longer complete the movement with correct form.
Increase muscle endurance	15 reps +	If your objective is sports specific then increasing your muscular endurance would be a smart move. Here you are delaying the point in which the muscle tires, increasing what's known as your lactate threshold.

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 2

Increase The Training Volume

Let's look at a very generalised training approach which includes completing an exercise for 3 sets of 10 reps with 1 minute rest in between each set.

In order to complete 10 repetitions applying a TUT of 2 seconds up and 2 seconds down each set would take 40 seconds to complete. That means for each set you are training for 40 seconds and resting for a minute, you are literally spending about 68% of your workout at rest, in an hour session you are only actually training for 20 minutes.

When we look at this style of training programme it is not hard to see that it wouldn't take long before you would be looking to reduce the time at rest and increase the time actively lifting. This is when you would start to assess the volume of your training in order to increase the overall intensity of your workout. There are a number of ways you can increase the overall volume of your programme.

Training method	Rep range	Detail
Drop Set	Set 1 : 10-12 Set 2: 5-8 Set 3 5-8	Here you are applying a manageable load for set 1, however are reducing the load for each following set to push the muscle passed the point of initial fatigue. This will improve your muscular endurance and also develop muscular hypertrophy.
Superset	Exercise 1: 8-12 reps Exercise 2: 8-12 reps	On the second exercise you are either targeting the same muscle as the first exercise or the opposing muscle. For example a leg extension followed by a leg curl. You are either pushing one muscle passed failure, or working the opposing muscle equally in the same set. You don't rest until you finish the second exercise

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 3

Include more compound lifts into your workout.

When it comes to bang for your buck compound exercises are hard to beat, this is simply because they recruit the most amount of muscle to complete each repetition. A compound lift is described as:

'Compound lifting is a term used to describe a style of training that integrates movements that stress multiple muscle groups at one time. To do this, the movement is multi-joint, meaning that it uses movement patterns that involve multiple joints flexing, extending, and/or rotating in unison with one another'. Fitbod.me

When you are in most modern gyms you are spoilt for choice when it comes choosing how you would like to weight train, as there is generally so much kit available. Generally you can categorise the equipment found in the gym into 3 different areas, each have their own pros and cons.

1. Fixed Resistance Machines.

These are the resistance machines you find in the gym where the weight you wish to lift is decided by moving a pin into the correct hole. They are usually black or grey in colour and place a load through a fixed movement into one main muscle.

A 'fixed movement' is any form of repetition where the movement from A to B is fixed, there is no need to stabilise the weight during each rep.

Pros	Cons
Great for beginners allowing them to get used to weight training.	Reduced muscle recruitment from joint stabilising muscles.
Places load into one main muscle which means you can easily achieve overload.	Does not activate the core to ensure correct posture.
The movement is controlled and so the risk of injury is reduce.	Some fixed resistance machines can be uncomfortable due to limited adjustment.
Weight adjustments are quick, making drop sets easier.	Typically focuses on one primary muscle.

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 3

2. Free Weights

Free weights are generally found in the 'weights area' of the gym. You will be able to easily identify this area as it's where lads compete to see who can have the loudest grunt in the smallest vest. Stereotypes aside this is the area you want to build up the confidence to enter, as in my opinion this is where real results aesthetically, physically and mentally are achieved. Free weights are the collective term given to any equipment which in its entirety is simply a weight designed to increase the load applied to a muscle through movement.

The collective term 'free weights' would include:

1. Dumbbells
2. Barbells
3. Weight plates (used to load the barbell)
4. Cable Machines (these are not fixed in movement)
5. Kettlebells

I genuinely can't think of any more cons when it comes to free weights, free weights are the reason you should be coming to the gym.

Do not be that person that goes to the gym simply to burn calories, just eat less calories!

You go to the gym to build strength, that's it!

Pros	Cons
Increases the strength and stability of a joint.	Can cause tendon injury if not confident with the movement or have not performed an adequate warm up
Increases core strength and improves posture.	
Increases overall strength through different plains of movement	
Is diverse, you can use free weights for a wide range of different exercises.	
Increases muscle activation during each repetition.	

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 3

3. Compound Exercises

Now yes you could be reading this now and be thinking 'compound exercises are done with free weights, what's the difference?' You would be correct, however I have separated compound lifts from general free weight use due to their overall impact on the body. As mentioned before a compound lift is an exercise that recruits multiple muscles and comprises multiple joint movements to complete an exercise.

These would typically include:

Bench Press
Pull Ups
Squat
Deadlift
Clean and Press
Weighted Lunges
Hand Clean to Press
Rows
Lat Pulldown

Pros	Cons
Maximise the most energy output per repetition.	Potential risk for injury through poor form or excessive weight.
Increases overall strength including core strength	Technique can take a while to master.
Increase the release of growth hormone which aids muscle development.	Puts pressure on the lower back if the core is not correctly engaged.
Increases joint stability.	
Improves overall posture	
Builds strength fast.	

Like I said before, you should be building the confidence to enter the free weights area and ideally this would include having gone through some compound lifts. But remember Rome was not built in a day and this is the beauty of progressive overload. You increase the load, volume and technicality of your training as both your strength and confidence increase. So don't think you need to walk straight into the gym tomorrow and start squatting the world, build up to it. This is why the fixed resistance machines are a great place to start.

Now I am not going to lie I struggled to find many cons when it comes to compound lifting, other than the risk of injury if the technique is not correct and the bar is over loaded. So as mentioned above, when you feel confident enough, start to introduce compound lifts into your programme. If you are one of my online clients you will have access to my tutorial videos to make sure your technique is correct. If you're not one of my clients you can apply to join at: www.JamesRobertson.fitness/apply-online

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 4

Be clear on your objective

There are many reasons why you should introduce regular weight training into your weekly training schedule.

- Improve overall health.
- Improve overall strength.
- To improve your body confidence and feel more masculine.
- To build muscle.
- To improve functional fitness

How you structure your weight training programme would very much depend on what your overall objective is.

The saying 'there are several ways you can skin a cat comes to mind' as your approach to weight training might not be the most optimal method to achieve

to your overall objective. So here are some basic guidelines to consider when developing your training programme, depending on your overall objective.

JAMES ROBERTSON FITNESS

AMBITION BOARD

'YOU ARE A WALKING REPRESENTATION OF YOUR DAILY HABITS' - MY MANTRA

Place your pictures here

A POSITIVE MINDSET = ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

A HEALTHY BODY = A POSITIVE MINDSET

START MAKING SUCCESS A HABIT

I WANT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T GIVE UP

A GOAL WITHOUT A PLAN IS JUST A WISH

ONLY I CAN CHANGE MY LIFE. NO ONE CAN DO IT FOR ME.

BEFORE PICTURE

3 MONTH PROGRESSION

6 MONTH PROGRESSION

12 MONTH PROGRESSION

LIST 3 AMBITIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ACHIEVE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

LETS MAKE THEM HAPPEN! THE NEXT 3 MONTHS I WILL ACHIEVE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

THE NEXT 6 MONTHS I WILL ACHIEVE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

THE NEXT 12 MONTHS I WILL HAVE ACHIEVED

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS! DO NOT LET YOURSELF BE HELD BACK BY NEGATIVE BELIEFS! REACH FOR THE SKY!

WWW.JAMESROBERTSON.FITNESS

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 4

1. To improve overall health.

Now this objective is often forgotten about as many men can become distracted by the aesthetic changes which come with regular training. Weight training simply for health reasons is more common in men over 50 as their overall health and mobility becomes far more of a concern than having a defined 6 pack. However, it is so important to remember that regular weight training comes with a number of positive health benefits when partaken consistently with around 3 sessions a week. These include:

- Increase in both muscular and skeletal strength.
- Increase in overall mobility.
- Improvement in circulatory health.
- Help control blood sugar levels
- Help to increase energy production.
- Increases hormone production such as the IGF-1 hormone which increase's cognitive function.
- Prevents muscle breakdown in later life.

If improving your health is your main objective when it comes to regular weight training then I applaud you for being so proactive in improving your overall wellbeing.

When the objective is simply aesthetic you can become demotivated if the visual results do not come as quickly as you would like. Remember Rome was not built in a day and neither will you! Focusing on the health benefits of regular weight training should help to keep you intrinsically motivated, learn to enjoy the process and not just the end destination.

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 4

2. Improve overall strength

So your objective is to increase your overall strength, well here is my advice on how to go about doing just that.

1. Make sure you are well and truly warmed up!

The most common injuries occur when someone tries to lift heavy but have not fully warmed up their tendons, this is a first class ticket to tendonitis (inflammation of the tendons) and typically occurs in both the shoulder and elbow joints. A 90° Shoulder rotation and a few warm up sets should do the trick.

2. Focus on compound lifts!

If you are looking to increase your strength, then you need to be strong in a variety of different plains of movement. With regards to your rep range, 4 sets of the following rep ranges would be a good start 10,8,5,3. There is no reason to hit a 1 rep max lift, unless you are competitively power lifting all this is going to do is tire you out for the next set.

3. Enjoy your rest time.

When it comes to strength training making sure you are 100% ready for the set is important to ensure you lift the maximum load for that rep range. Anything between 2-4 minutes is average rest in-between heavy sets to ensure maximum recovery.

4. Eat like you have never eaten before!

I remember reading an article from Hugh Jackman about how he got in shape for the film Wolverine. He said that he used to view his food like he did his training, just one more spoonful! If you are not eating enough calories, you simply will not get stronger, simple!

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 5

To improve your body confidence.

For me this is a big one let's be honest when we are in our 20s we have quite a selfish outlook on life as all we have to worry about is ourselves. I know for me when I was in my mid 20s I was working just 5 hours a day as a full time Personal Trainer. The rest of the time I was in the gym training getting ready for my next physique competition where I stood on stage in my pants.

This all changed as soon as I hit my 30s, I bought a house, got married and had a little boy. It was by the end of that year I realised that my life had completely changed and so had my priorities. To create a stable environment for my family at that time after 6 years I put my personal training business to one side and began managing gyms in London for a stable salary. After 2 years of little training, sleep and an adequate diet my body confidence had dwindled massively.

This is the main reason I created this coaching company, for individuals who have been through or are currently going through this period where they feel they have lost any self confidence that they used to have. Firstly, give yourself a pat on the back, the fact you feel like this is an indicator that you have placed others before yourself and given the best of you to your family, you are a Superhero!

For me my physique became my identity, I was that 6ft 5 ripped lad who stood out in a crowd, but I quickly lost this identity and instead became a skinny, tired man who worked all day and was up all night bottle feeding Albie. He was premature and so we had to feed him every 2 hours, the only problem was he was also colic so it took around an hour to wind him. Just 2 years later I was knackered and felt half the man I used to be, it definitely effected my own perception of my masculinity. But then I was the one setting my own parameters for what my masculinity looked like. I realise now a man is never at his most masculine until he sacrifices for the needs of his family, but I digress!

Weight training increases your body confidence but to achieve this you are going to have to focus on the following 3 outcomes.

GOLDEN RULE NUMBER 5

1. Reduce your body fat.

For this you need to make sure you achieve a calorie deficit (consuming less calories than you burn each day). There are a number of different ways to achieve this but I recommend tracking your daily calories through an app called 'My Fitness Pal'.

2. Increase your muscle density

Due to the fact you are training in a calorie deficit, achieving huge increases in strength will be hard to achieve. Instead, regular weight training along with a calorie deficit will increase your muscle definition and overall body confidence when you see your progress in the mirror.

3. To build muscle

Now this point kind of follows on from my previous, as building muscle is 100% going to improve your body confidence right? Hell Yes! But to build muscle you not only need to lift weights regularly with a steady increase in volume, but you also need to make sure you are consuming enough calories and protein to allow that muscle to build. This means if you have ambitions of achieving a 6 pack you might want to reconsider your overall objectives. The saying you can't chase 2 rabbits is very much true when it comes to either building muscle or stripping body fat. Yes you get some trainers that claim you can do both, but trust me its difficult, so for now lets keep things attainable.

To build muscle successfully takes time, in reality, years! It's a constantly evolving process, so if this is your objective then you need to play the long game. To build muscle you need to ensure you achieve the following:

- Ensure you fatigue the muscle with a rep range between 8 -12 reps to begin with, hitting failure at the end of each set.
- Factor in progressive overload into your programme to ensure your muscle development is consistent.
- Lift heavy on all compound lifts a rep range of 5-8 will be good.
- Consume enough calories and protein to support growth.
- Remain consistent with your implemented training and diet regime.



HINTS & TIPS

Before I wrap up this eBook I just wanted to end with my tips when it comes to resistance training, so you can make the most of the time you invest in the gym.

If you are new to weight training and are considering starting a weight based programme then this is perfect as you can learn to adopt some great habits from the start.

If you implement my advice below and ensure you enjoy a restful night's sleep then you cannot fail to achieve some great results from your training.

HINTS & TIPS TO IMPLIMENT

1. Practise mind muscle connection.

With the exception of compound exercises which are multi joint movements, a lot of other exercises allow you to focus the contraction to just one particular muscle. Such an example would be focusing on the cognitive connection of the bicep during a bicep curl, or your chest muscles during a dumbbell chest press. Each muscle in your body is connected to a nerve ending via a motor unit, it is this unit that instructs the contraction of the muscle. Every muscle in your body is made up of fibres as I mentioned previously, however the amount of fibres connected to each motor unit varies depending on the muscle. Every muscle in your body contains a number of motor units and in order to maximise muscle recruitment during a repetition it is vital to recruit as many units within the working muscle as possible.

To do this you need to improve what's known as your mind muscle connection. Have you ever tried to do something simple and you just simply couldn't do it? When I was a kid I always wanted to be able to wink but I couldn't, the reason why, I simply didn't have a clear cognitive pathway to the muscles required to complete the movement, this had to be learnt through concentration and repetition. It is the same when it comes to training your muscles in the gym! Your body is clever it will recruit any available muscles to complete a movement and so you can be in danger of carrying out an exercise and not even working the muscle you were trying to work. My go to exercise to demonstrate this is the Seated Row, now the Seated Row is designed to mainly focus the Rhomboid Muscle in-between your shoulder blades. As you carry out a repetition the Rhomboid muscle contracts to pull both shoulder blades together creating a squeeze on the muscle at the point of most contraction. However your brain is clever and knows that it can complete a very similar movement using your biceps alone, visually you would see very little difference between the 2 movements however on the latter you would achieve very little Rhomboid contraction, so you are almost wasting your time! You get a similar response when people ego lift i.e. attempting to complete an exercise with more weight than they can handle and so their brain uses alterative muscles to complete the movement.

Being able to focus on a muscle while under tension is one of the most important skills to adopt during weight training. Before you begin an exercise be clear on the muscle you aim to work, then focus on this muscle through each rep you complete. You want to be feeling the muscle stretch during the negative phase of the movement and then feeling the squeeze during the positive phase of the movement. Improving the cognitive connection between different muscles will take time, but if practised consistently you will automatically train with this level of focus. **This is how to accelerate the results you achieve from your training**

HINTS & TIPS TO IMPLEMENT

2. Be aware of your form!

Now you don't need to be a genius to know that exercise form is vitally important when it comes to achieving the results you want from your training. Everyone knows this however for some they would rather sacrifice their form for a moment of self-gratification, please don't do this!

Exercise form is so important and has been covered in the previous section. You do not need to go far these days to find some coach doing a form based exercise video especially on Youtube (my MEA Coaching programme has over 70 tutorial videos to perfect your form) so there is a lot of available material at your fingertips to check the correct way to perform each exercise, especially the compound lifts. So please do not sacrifice form to feed your ego and focus on good technique at all times even as you fatigue. Never lose the ability to focus on the muscle you are working throughout each repetition.

3. Training Variety

I know this ebook is all about weight training however do not put all your eggs into one basket if you want to maximise both aesthetic and performance goals. Variety is the spice of life and this saying is so true when it comes to improving your fitness. You now know the benefits of strength training, however alternative types of training can also help improve your performance in the gym as well as your functional fitness relevant to all aspects of your life.

At the point of writing this ebook here is my current training split based on the available time I have. This is far from an optimal split but the best I can do due to work and family commitments:

Monday: Push session in the gym

Tuesday: Pull session in the gym

Wednesday: 30 minute swim

Thursday: 30 minute swim

Friday: Family day

Saturday: Metabolic Conditioning

Sunday: Off.

HINTS & TIPS TO IMPLEMENT

Now your training split will be decided by your training objective, however I have added this point into my final tips because if your objective is to improve your overall health as well as your body confidence then mixing up your training for me is the optimal approach. For me the don of all exercises is swimming, I love it! Not only is it an aerobic workout but it is also great for muscle development and recovering after some hard sessions in the gym. So my point here is get in the gym and lift there is little else that can rival the stimulus you achieve through loading a muscle. However if you are able to get in the pool, go for a run or enjoy a sport then add this into your weekly workout programme also.

Anything that sets performance goals over aesthetic, to me is a win win.

4. Performance Vs Aesthetic training objectives.

Before I carry on I understand that the name of this ebook is 'Time to transform' although that doesn't just simply mean aesthetically. That said, we all lift weights to look good right! Even those cross fitters who throw weights around for fun to improve their strength and performance will deep down appreciate the aesthetic look that has been created.

However I want you to think more constructively when it comes to setting the parameters for measuring your progress from your time spent in the gym. As you know I used to stand on stage in my pants after spending 2 hours a day in the gym in order to get my body to a point aesthetically that I was happy with, I would just like to add that this never happened! When I was stage ready with a sub 5% body fat level I had the worst body dysmorphia that I had ever had in my life. I would constantly compare myself to other guys in the gym, in the street even in restaurants. I remember going clothes shopping with my now wife and getting angry in the changing rooms because none of the clothes fitted me! I was 6ft 5 in height and weighed in at 18 stone of course none of the standard clothes were going to fit me.

My point here is it is human nature to pick faults with yourself, and the more time you invest in the gym trying to correct these faults the more attention you will pay to them. I know right now your main objective is to improve your body confidence, increase your strength and reduce your body fat. But as you become more comfortable in the gym I want you to expand on this training objective and start to set yourself performance based goals.

HINTS & TIPS TO IMPLEMENT

These can include:

- The amount of weight lifted during a compound lift.
- The amount of reps you can complete at a certain weight.
- To improve your muscular endurance meaning you can place load upon the muscle during a longer period of time, say through a drop or quad set.
- Learning the technique for more complex lifts such as compound lifts.

I want you to learn to fall in love with the process of going to the gym and improving the overall strength and performance of your body, I don't want you to just focus on the end result. When you look into statistics surrounding gym retention levels a huge 50% of gym members cancel their membership within the first 6 months. They claim it's because they don't have time, however they did for the first few weeks after they joined! The reason is they just focused on the end result and did not fall in love with the daily habits that are required to achieve that result. By focusing on improving your strength and muscular endurance in the gym you will find you push yourself harder, you find the strength to push heavier and as a result find yourself achieving the aesthetic result much faster.

So the most important bit of advice I can give you and I want to end on this point is when it comes to weight training and exercise in general, is learn to love the process and not just the end result. By loving the process you are understanding that there is an end result you would like to achieve however you take pleasure in completing the daily tasks that are required to achieve that objective. You will see just how incredible your body is and will learn to fall in love with the incredible advancements it is able to make.

If you can fall in love with the process then you will have improved your overall health and body confidence for life, and for me that is the biggest transformation of all.

Thank you for taking the time to read my 'It's time to transform' ebook it means a lot that you have stayed with me until the end.

However this is not where your journey ends, this is simply the end of the beginning for you.



ON A FURTHER NOTE

I would like to invite you to join my facebook group 'Become Invincible' a group designed to help you become the best versions of yourself both physically and mentally. You will initially go through my member journey which is completely free and includes the following:

- My Become Invincible audio presentation taking you through my 5 step process to muscling up your mindset.
- You will then download my 'Ambition Board' and start to set your own ambitions over the next 3, 6 and 12 months.
- After that you will receive my 'Build your Body Confidence' ebook which will teach you all the daily habits I have briefly mentioned within this ebook.
- The daily habits which will help you to improve your overall strength and body confidence.
- You will then take action!
- You will receive 10% off all my training programmes, recipe books and educational journals to help you begin the journey I hope you will learn to fall in love with.

Just go onto facebook groups and search '**Become Invincible!**'

If you have been inspired to get into the gym and start lifting then I have some great training programmes available at www.jamesrobertson.fitness, programmes which cater for every experience level from complete novice to dedicated gym bro.

I look forward to welcoming you into my group and helping you as you begin your transformation.