

MYX8



"Consistency is the key to victory."

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DISCLAIMER

Weight training is a popular exercise activity that has been shown to have many physical health benefits. The risk of injury is very low when it is done correctly. However, as with any sport or form of exercise, there is always a *risk* for injury. It is in your best interest to learn, and adhere to, proper technique on all exercises. Avoid adding more weight to the bar than you can handle; and always be aware of your surroundings in the gym, including other people. It is helpful to have someone who can help watch your technique and to “spot” your lifts if/when necessary.

I am not a doctor or medical professional. The information provided or linked within this eBook is *not* meant to replace or provide medical advice; nor is it meant to diagnose or treat anything.

It is always recommended to consult a qualified doctor or medical professional (preferably one who is familiar with weight training or athletes) before beginning *any* new weight training or exercise regimen, especially if you have a personal or family history of medical issues that could be exacerbated by strenuous lifting (e.g. heart problems, asthma, etc.).

I (the author), MyWeightLifting.com, and any employees or affiliates are *not* responsible for any injuries, health issues or any other damages that you may incur (i) before, during or after using this workout routine, and/or (ii) from applying the information in this eBook, as well as the information found in the links to pages on MyWeightLifting.com and any other websites. *You* are solely responsible for any consequences that may occur.

You are also responsible for the muscle you build, the strength you gain and the fat you shed!

OVERVIEW

Really important stuff

What the Hell Does MYx8 Mean!? MYx8, which is pronounced, “my by eight,” is a play on words of sorts. The “My” is there because MYx8 is the official workout routine of MyWeightLifting.com...

...The “x8” (“by eight”) is in the name because all but one of the exercises are done in sets of 8 repetitions (i.e. 3x8, which means 3 sets of 8 repetitions is often referred to as “three by eight” for short). But most importantly, I thought the name sounded cool!

What is MyWeightLifting.com All About & Who Am I? MyWeightLifting.com is directed at guys who want to get the best of both worlds by maximizing muscle *and* strength. Why choose just one or the other?

One of the important themes of MyWeightLifting.com is that a personalized approach to weight lifting is essential to your long-term success, since a “cookie-cutter” approach can only get you so far – Hence, the “My” in the name of the site.

Before I go any further, let me introduce myself. My name is Alex, and I am the owner and author of MyWeightLifting.com. I am here to equip with the knowledge and tools you’ll need to survive and thrive on your mission to success in the gym, starting with the MYx8.

If you want to know more about yours truly or simply keep up with latest additions to the site, then you can subscribe via [e-mail](#) or [RSS](#) and [sign up for the newsletter](#) if you haven’t already done so – You’ll receive all important site updates, including the “About Me” page that I plan to add relatively soon (complete with pictures and everything)...

...But until then, you’ll have to take my word that I know what I’m talking about and that I practice what I preach. I mean, for all you know, I could be a balding, 500lb professional fat man named Hubert who lives in his parents basement eating Little Debbie’s and refried sticks of butter while living vicariously through reruns of Dancing with the Stars – So thanks for your trust.

Further Questions. This eBook and the information on the main site should answer just about any question you should have about this program. However, I’m sure there will still be some things I missed or need to clarify. So if that’s the case, then ask your question on the [MYx8 Routine Q&A](#) – But *please*, be sure to carefully read through this eBook and the links within, before you ask.

Stuff to read

This eBook focuses on how to train using the MYx8 Routine. Below is a recommended list of articles and resources that provide information on training and diet that you need to know to get the most out of this routine – Many of these same links are provided at different points in the eBook:

- [All You Need to Know About Weight Lifting](#)
- [How to Create Your Personalized Diet Plan](#)
- [Progressive Overload Is the Key to Success](#)

- [How to Gain Muscle Mass & Build Strength](#)
- [The Weight Lifting Exercise Tutorial Database](#)
- [Brush Up on Your Muscle Anatomy Knowledge](#)

The Basics

Workout A	Workout B
Squats 3x8	Squats 3x8
Bench Press 3x8	Inverted Rows or Pull Ups 3x8
Pendlay Rows 3x8	Overhead Press 3x8
Deadlifts 2x8	Deadlifts 2x8
Face Pulls or Bent Over Lateral Raises 3x12-16	Bicep Curls 3x8

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week 1	Workout A	Workout B	Workout A
Week 2	Workout B	Workout A	Workout B

Note

If you have any trouble understanding some of the terms below, see the [weight lifting guide](#) for explanations of basic weight lifting terms and concepts.

The Basics. Now that I've introduced myself and explained the etymology of the MYx8, I figure it's time to explain something more useful. Below are the most important aspects of the routine.

- **Warming Up.** You must do a [warm up routine](#) before you begin every workout. Don't skip this. (See page 15 for details.)
- **Reps & Sets.** As shown in the workout template, there are 8 repetitions (reps) for all sets on every exercise, with the exception of face pulls/bent over lateral raises. Also shown in the template, there are either 2 or 3 sets for a given exercise. These are *work sets* only. You must do *warm up sets* before the work sets.
- **Sets Across.** This routine is done with *sets across*. That means that all work sets for each exercise should be done using the same weight.
- **Proper Form.** Don't sacrifice good form for heavier weight. ***This is by far the most important guideline.***
- **Adding Weight.** You must consistently follow the [principle of progress overload](#) in order to see results – That is, you have to progressively increase the weight lifted on each exercise, over time (i.e. from

workout to workout). For example, if you bench pressed 100 lbs for 3 sets of 8 reps during one workout, then you should aim to bench press 105 lbs for 3 sets of 8 the next time.

- **Going to Failure?** Try to avoid failure in the first few weeks. If you do fail, it should be on the last set. Try to choose weights that allow you to do all 8 reps, but have enough energy left in you to do 2-3 more solid reps on the last set. But once you're a several weeks in, you can cut it closer (e.g. have enough energy left for 0-1 more reps on the last set).

Note

This eBook covers topics related to training, only. In order to actually build muscle (or lose fat) and gain strength on this routine, you must also have your [diet plan](#) in order. Additionally, you should be getting plenty of sleep each night (i.e. 7-9 hours per night for most people).

Purpose

The purpose of the MYx8 routine is to:

- Master the techniques of a select few compound exercises that teach you efficient body movement.
- Build the initial foundation of strength and muscle that's needed to move on to more advanced training.
- Emphasize the importance of a healthy pushing-to-pulling exercise ratio.
- Improve performance by prioritizing the warm up and strategically adding work for better shoulder health.

MYx8 versus other routines

So you want to know why you should use the MYx8 Routine when there are so many other choices out there, eh? Let me explain...

- **Higher Reps.** There are a few popular beginner routines out there that call for sets of 5 reps. While I am all for using low reps with heavy weight in general, it is not the best way for a beginner to train. I don't care if you're trying to be a powerlifter or the world's strongest man, as a beginner, you should use higher reps for the following reasons.
 - **Lighter Weights → Better Form.** Higher reps force you to use lighter weights, which allows you to do the movement correctly. Beginner routines with lower reps cause you to use heavier weights than necessary, which inevitably interferes with your form.
 - **More Practice → Faster Strength Progress.** Beginners get stronger predominately through neural adaptation, which occurs from practicing the exercises. And so, you will get stronger, faster, by practicing and reinforcing proper technique through higher repetition training.
 - **Better Progression → Rapid Results.** As a beginner, your body does not yet "know" how to lift explosively. So if you were to use lower reps and heavier weight, it would be much more difficult to progress (i.e. add weight to bar from workout to workout) because explosiveness is needed to efficiently progress with heavier weights. Higher reps lets you progress at a much more efficient rate, while also developing your explosiveness. A win-win.
- **More Pulling than Pushing.** Nearly all of the well-known routines out there have more sets of pushing exercises (e.g. bench press, overhead press) than sets of pulling exercises (e.g. rows, pull ups). This doesn't make sense for a couple major reasons:
 - **We Live In A "Pushing World."** People (at least in industrialized societies) tend to have overly tight pushing muscles with underdeveloped and overstretched back muscles. This is from so much sitting, very little standing, and lots of hunching over throughout the day. Add to this, that trainees are eager to focus more intensely on the "mirror muscles" (i.e. the chest and shoulders – pushing muscles), and the end result is a muscular imbalance and poor posture.

- **We Have More Pulling Muscles.** Take a second and think of how much muscle mass you have on your back compared to how much you have on your chest and shoulders. That's right, there's a whole lot more back mass. So why does it make sense to train your back muscles *less* than the chest and shoulder muscles? It doesn't.
- **Pulling Before Pushing.** On top of having fewer sets for pulling exercises, other routines also tend to place the pulling exercises *after* the pushing exercises. This is inefficient because it means you're always doing these exercises when your body is the most fatigued. However, MYx8 is organized in such a way that Workout B puts a pulling exercise before the pushing exercise (i.e. inverted rows or pull ups before overhead press), and workout A puts a pushing exercise before a pulling exercise (i.e. bench press before Pendlay rows). This way is more "even."

MYx8 works best for...

MYx8 was made with one group in mind. This routine is targeted toward...

- **The Newbie.** If you are completely new to weight training or have just recently started, then you need not look any further. This routine was made with you in mind. It doesn't matter if you want to be stronger than Zeus, bigger than the Jolly Green Giant or a combination of both – MYx8 builds the *platform* that you, as a beginner, must develop *before* you can successfully implement more individualized approaches for one specific goal.

But it *also* works great if you are...

Sure, this routine may be *targeted* toward beginners. But all hope is not yet lost if you don't fall into the newbie category. MYx8 can also work like a charm for a few other types of trainees. If you fit into one of the groups below, then you too, can enjoy the benefits of MYx8:

- **The Eternal Hardgainer.** This is you if you've tried, tried and tried again, only to end up back where you started. You've thought that it might just be bad genes. You just can't seem to gain more than a few pounds of mass (if that), and your strength progress has been minimal. But there's good news! You just haven't tried the right thing *yet*. This is it.
- **The Recovering Bodybuilder Bro.** This is you if you've been devoted to 5 or 6 day split routines. Maybe you dabbled in high intensity cardio a few days a week in hopes of becoming as "cut" as a VVS diamond. Now you've arrived at a crossroads – Your old methods seemed to work wonders in the first few weeks and months of training. But lately your progress has lost steam despite having done everything you thought was right. Your lack of gains isn't due to lack of trying. It's due to poor training. High volume, 5+ day split training and excess cardio just isn't efficient. And it's certainly not sustainable unless you're a genetic freak or if you're juicin' on the juice, so to speak.
- **The "Squats and Deadwhats?" Guy.** This is you if you've been a casual gym goer, but have never trained with any of the major lifts. You've likely been a die-hard fan of machines and isolation exercises instead of free weight compound exercises. And sure, you may have frequented the squat rack... to whip out a couple sets of bicep curls. But who cares? That's all in the past now. You're ready to get serious, kick some ass and move up in the world!
- **The Born-Again Lifter.** This is you if you've been away from lifting for a while. **For maximum effect, read the following in the [crazy preacher](#) voice** Maybe you've found yourself on a reckless path of sin, instead of repping sets at the gym. Maybe you've been gone 10 weeks or maybe it's been 10 years. However long it's been, child, you are forgiven! Let me be the first to welcome you back with open arms – Alas, you have returned to your true calling at the *Church of Jesus Christ, That's Some Heavy-Ass Weight!* Can I get an amen!?!
- **The Maintenance Man.** ...No I don't mean the repair guy. This is you if you're an experienced lifter whose current goal is to maintain your strength and muscle mass. Maybe you're satisfied with what you've accomplished, maybe you've just started a hectic new job, or whatever – The actual reason doesn't matter. If this is you, then you would only need to do MYx8 twice a week (or 3 times a week, but with reduced volume for each session).



CLARIFICATIONS, WHAT TO EXPECT & SAFETY CONCERNS

“How old do I have to be?”

It really doesn't matter how old you are.

Unless you're an infant or toddler or a “super-senior citizen” on life support, then age shouldn't stop you from enjoying the benefits of MYx8.

“Age Ain't Nothin' but a Number!”

– Unknown

Young Whippersnappers. Anyone under 13 should get parent approval first and have some kind of adult supervision when starting weight training. If you are under 13, it's great that you're interested in weight lifting at your age. But if you start lifting this early, then it's *doubly* important for you to focus on the following: Technique, technique, and most importantly, *technique*. Oh yeah, did I mention you should focus on technique? Yes, you should still progress to heavier weights, but weight should always take a backseat to *strict* form.

You'll have plenty of time to lift heavier once you're blasting through puberty, and the hormones are raging. And just to prove wrong any naysayers who think lifting is bad for preteens/teens, I'll refer you to the case of [Curt White](#) (now 49) who was already training seriously for Olympic-style weightlifting at the tender age of 10. He went on to set records for the clean and jerk and the snatch, and participated in the '88 Olympic Games. Needless to say, he did not ruin his body.

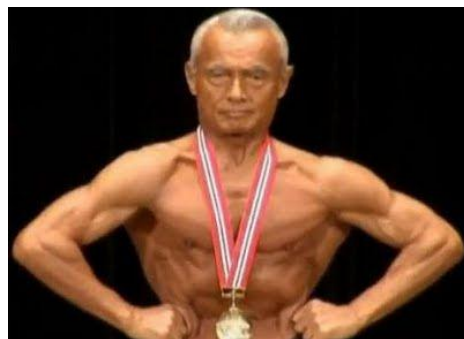


There's a new generation of young lifters (including 9 year old *Chance Ikei*, shown on the right), who all seem to be perfectly happy and healthy kids. Click the image to see a video of Chance, posted by the YouTube user, [ikeiperformance](#).

Old Geezers. Anyone over 80 should first get approval from their children before starting... Nah, but seriously, if you an older individual and considering this routine, then your mind's in the right place!

There are many 70-80+ year old bodybuilders and weight lifters out there, and they are living proof of just how strong, healthy and youthful you can become from weight training.

I mean, seriously, who in their right mind would dare to trifle with this strapping young lad on the right, 74 year old Tsutomu Tosaka? He puts most guys in their 20s to shame! Click the image to see a video of Tosaka posted by YouTube user, [ITNExtreme](#).



But if you are an older individual, who is not confident with your *current* fitness level, then look into hiring a good personal trainer who has experience working with older trainees. Don't dismiss yourself and lose out on amazing benefits because of the *artificial* barrier of age!

“Is MYx8 for gaining weight/muscle or losing weight/fat?”

This routine works for either goal.

Whether you gain weight or lose weight depends completely on your [diet](#). You'll lose weight if you burn more calories than you take in. And you'll gain weight if you take in more calories than you burn.

In this eBook, I generally talk about the routine in terms of gaining muscle and weight because that's what most people are looking do. But that shouldn't stop you if your primary goal is to lose fat and weight.

I should also note that, as a beginner, you're more likely to gain muscle mass and lose fat at the same time. So it's important that you don't rely just on the scale to track your body's progress. That is, if you gained 10 lbs of muscle and lost 5 lbs of fat, the scale would only tell you that you gained 5 lbs.

It's a good idea to also use a fat caliper, take measurements with measuring tape and take progress pictures.

“What results can I expect to see?”

Assuming you follow the routine as directed and your diet is also on point, then you will, *without a doubt*, be significantly bigger, stronger, healthier and even more confident.

You may be looking for specific, guaranteed numbers. But it's impossible to predict the extent of your individual results since each person different – That said, I'll do my best to give you some “ballpark” expectations.

Although it will certainly be a challenge, I hope that you will raise the bar on my expectations and prove them to be *underestimations* of what is feasible. Don't let my expectations dictate your potential. Arnold said it best:



[Image credit: d_vdm](#)

“The mind is the limit. As long as the mind can envision the fact that you can do something, you can do it, as long as you really believe 100 percent.”
– Arnold Schwarzenegger

Muscle Gains. You may gain anywhere from 15 lbs to 40+ lbs. Some of the weight gained *may* be from fat, which is sometimes necessary to gain significant muscle. But some beginners can actually lose body fat while gaining muscle...

...What I can say for certain is that by the time you finish MYx8, you *will* look better. And unless you're a reclusive hermit living all alone in the woods, people *will* notice the improvement. Of course you shouldn't base your self-esteem on what they think, but compliments are a decent indicator that you're training and dieting correctly.

Strength Gains. In terms of strength gains, you can look forward to dramatic improvements on all of the lifts. The results will vary significantly based on your strength *before* beginning the routine. So it's pretty much pointless to speculate on specific numbers, but I know that's what most people want to hear. I'll do my best...

To keep it simple, I'll only talk about the *Big 3*: Squat, bench and deadlift – By the time you truly exhaust gains from this routine, it would not be unreasonable to have 1 rep maxes of 250-300 lbs for the squat, 200-225 lbs

for the bench press and 315-375 lbs for the deadlift. Again, these aren't guarantees, just reasonable estimates. Your numbers could be lower *or* higher.

Technique. You will have developed impressive technique on important exercises. This means you can look forward to a future that isn't filled with injuries, aches and pains. It means that you are moving up in the world and have earned the "license" to add new exercises if you so choose. It means that you are on your way to continued efficient gains; and unlike the uneducated masses that flock to gyms only to see stagnant progress, your progress shall never bleed dry because of failing to do something as fundamental as using proper technique.

Posture. It's likely that you will have improved your posture at the end of this routine. Although posture improvement is not the main goal of MYx8, it is a nice side benefit. Since the routine is intentionally designed to have more back/pulling exercises than upper body pushing exercises, it consequently has the potential to correct or prevent postural deficiencies that cause you to hunch over.

Note

If you do have a major postural deficiency, this routine is by no means a standalone solution. Often times, the best method for treating postural deficiencies is with a personalized and specific routine from a *good* physical therapist. So if you believe you require help, seek professional advice, and see if the MYx8 routine can be used in tandem with whatever regimen you are prescribed.

Confidence & Mental Fortitude. You will not only transform physically, but you will also become mentally stronger. If you follow through with the routine, it's impossible to *not* become more disciplined and confident.

Sorry to disappoint if you were expecting to hear me spout out ridiculous claims like "Guaranteed to add 40 lbs of pure muscle mass in 1 month" or "Bench press by 300 lbs in 4 weeks."

I'm not a snake oil salesman who's scheming to lure you and your wallet in, by making impossible promises. My aim is to provide you with what you need in order to see great results, *without* the hype. Hype creates disappointment, and that's bad for both you and me.

That said, the realistic expectations that I outlined above should be more than enough to get you motivated. And if they aren't, then boy, have I got something for you!...

...It's a magical muscle potion made from *the* finest snake oil known to man. It's anecdotally proven to make you look like Arnold in his prime, without having to do all that heavy lifting! And let's not forget the side benefits of curing all your woes and worries. It can be all yours for the bargain price of an arm and a leg. (*sarcasm*)

"How long should I do this routine for? Should I modify the routine at any point?"

Keep doing the routine until you go for at least 2 weeks without any strength progression. (Be sure that when your progress does stop, that it's not due to poor diet or sleep.)

There's no way to tell how long it will be until you stop progressing and need a more advanced routine. It might be 4 months for some or 12 months for others.

And to the second part of the question – No, do not modify the routine as you go along (unless it's for a reason that's covered in this eBook, such as an inability to do a certain exercise because of an injury or major flexibility/mobility issues).

Stay committed and be patient. It will pay off.

“How long until I see a difference in strength & Size?”

Patience, young grasshopper...

“Patience is waiting. Not passively waiting. That is laziness. But to keep going when the going is hard and slow – that is patience.”

– Unknown

...Results will come soon enough. Here's what you can expect if you follow the routine consistently and as directed.

Strength. You will see strength increases by your second workout. From that point on:

1. You'll observe strength gains from workout to workout for several weeks to a few months. (Don't be worried if there are a few workouts where you can't increase the lifts from the previous workout – It's likely just a fluke or a bad day if you're doing everything else correctly.)
2. Eventually though, your progress will slow down to the point where you make progress every other workout, then every third workout, etc. Once progress comes to a standstill, then it's time to change up your routine.

Muscle. Size increases should become noticeable after 4-6 weeks. Muscle growth takes longer for two reasons:

1. There's about a 6 week delay between strength and muscle gains (no matter what routine you're doing) because your muscles are only “learning” through neural adaptation, how to perform the lifts. In other words, you can't gain muscle mass since you are not yet able overload the muscles with sufficient weight. After this initial period of rapid strength gains from neural adaptation, it's possible to better activate the muscles and use loads that are sufficient for stimulating growth.
2. Muscle gains are not as easy to observe and track as are strength gains. You have to gain a couple pounds before you can notice a visual difference.

“Is the routine safe?”

The short answer is yes, this is a very safe routine if you do it as laid out.

You can minimize your risk of injury by making the effort to lift with proper form and by using caution while handling and being around the equipment...

...*However*, there is always a risk for injury with any form of physical activity or sport, including weight training.

As stated in the disclaimer, you should always consult a physician before beginning a new exercise regimen, especially if you have previous health issues or have very poor overall fitness.

But in general, [weight training is very safe](#) – It has just about the second lowest injury rate among all physical/sport activities, at just 0.0035 injuries per 100 hours (the lowest is Olympic-style weightlifting). On the other end of the spectrum, the data shows that playing soccer (i.e. football) – at 6.2 injuries per 100 – hours, is just an accident waiting to happen!



Most injuries incurred while lifting weights are caused by accidents with equipment, such as slamming a finger between two weights, dropping a dumbbell on your foot, bonking your head against a barbell, or partaking in [excessive horseplay and/or roughhousing at the gym](#). Nearly all other injuries are preventable if you use good form with weight that you can handle.

“If I'm not fully grown yet, will this routine stunt my growth?”

No.

Lifting weights does not stunt growth. There's no evidence supporting this claim, but this pesky myth doesn't want to go away.

You can only stunt your growth if you fracture a growth plate *and* don't receive treatment... and even then, it's a maybe.

Growth plates, if you didn't know, are at the end of your bones. They are cartilaginous when you're a kid and adolescence, but they ossify (harden) once you mature and stop growing.

The growth plates are most vulnerable near the end of adolescence when they are transitioning from cartilage to hardened bone. If you're in an accident (i.e. falling or crashing into something) at this point in your development, then you're at a higher risk for a growth plate injury.

So the only way that stunting your growth in the gym would even be possible, is if you somehow managed to drop some fall, trip and/or drop heavy weights on yourself (which would actually be the result of an accident – not a result of the activity of weight training) *and* failed to get it treated afterward...

...But that scenario just doesn't happen. However, sports like American football, soccer (i.e. football) and basketball are among the most common activities where growth plate injuries occur. [Click to read more about the myth that weight lifting stunts growth.](#)

“Does this routine work for natural lifters?”

Yes.

This routine was made specifically for naturals. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to take steroids to gain awe-inspiring strength or to build a herculean physique.

“I Don't Care about strength. Shouldn't I do a bodybuilding-style routine?”

D'oh!... **Smacks forehead out of frustration**

No, you definitely should *not* do a bodybuilding-style routine. Although that approach might *seem* logical, it's actually counterproductive for beginners trying to gain muscle.

Bodybuilding-Style Routines - Definition

When referring to “bodybuilding-style routines,” I’m not saying anything negative about bodybuilders or the sport/lifestyle of bodybuilding. Rather, I’m referring to the typical, garbage-quality body part split routines that are recommended to many beginners. They involve ~5 workouts per week, training each muscle once per week, with each workout consisting of a ton of sets and exercises for 1 or 2 muscle groups.

I don't care if you want to be the next Ronnie Coleman, a ballerina or both. If you're a beginner and are striving to [gain as much muscle mass as possible](#) (in both the short-term and the long-term), then you have to do *all* of the following:

1. **Eat Right.** Eat to build muscle by consuming enough calories and protein. See [diet plan](#) for details.
2. **Sleep Well.** Sleep enough so your body can recover and rebuild. (7-9 hours/night works for most people.)
3. **Train Smart.** Learn [proper exercise technique](#) so you can train efficiently and build a foundation of strength, which you can then leverage for “pure” hypertrophy (muscle building) training, if you so desire.

Okay, so let's analyze that list. Hypothetically speaking... *if* you were to pass up a quality *beginner* routine such as MYx8, for one of the many brain-numbingly stupid bodybuilding-style split routines, then #3 would be a no-go. You simply can't learn proper technique and gain sufficient strength in any decent time frame with such a routine...

...Sure, you'd make *seemingly* great progress in the first few weeks, but that's about as long as it will work before your progress dries up and you scratch your head, wondering what went wrong.

“Okay. But why do so many other beginners keep doing those routines?” you may ponder. “Are they bat shit crazy?! Are they completely out of their minds and off their rocker?”

No.

But they *have* fallen prey to the more-is-better attitude.

They are attracted to, and mesmerized by, the mainstream bodybuilding hoopla that says you can't build muscle without training several days per week, doing a butt-load of volume, tons of isolation work, bi-daily sessions of praying and repenting to the Hypertrophy Gods, and so on.

Such routines are syndicated by different muscle magazines/sites and supplement companies, and endorsed by pro bodybuilders...

...These routines may work wonders for Mr. Olympia contenders who have amazing genetics and several years or decades of lifting experience. And oh yeah, it just so happens that they're also juiced to the gills with a schmorgesborg of steroids, HGH, insulin, diuretics, and probably other space-age potions or concoctions I've never even heard of.

These “I just want huge muscles and don't care about gaining strength” comments have got to be the number one reason why so many beginners start off on the wrong foot.

So, if you're a newbie and end up ignoring these golden nuggets of wisdom, which I have so unselfishly supplied to you, then just remember that I told you so. ;-D

Do yourself a big favor and don't go down *that* path of empty promises and disappointment – Trust me, I've been there and it's not a pretty scene... **sniffle sniffle**

But seriously. Don't do it.

MYX8 – THE SPECIFICS

For your convenience, I'll post the workout again here:

Workout A	Workout B
Squats 3x8	Squats 3x8
Bench Press 3x8	Inverted Rows or Pull Ups 3x8
Pendlay Rows 3x8	Overhead Press 3x8
Deadlifts 2x8	Deadlifts 2x8
Face Pulls or Bent Over Lateral Raises 3x12-16	Bicep Curls 3x8

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week 1	Workout A	Workout B	Workout A
Week 2	Workout B	Workout A	Workout B

“How do I do the Exercises?”

Use the following links (also linked in the workout template, above) to see full exercise tutorials with videos and written instructions:

- [Squats](#)
- [Bench Press](#)
- [Inverted Rows](#) or [Pull Ups](#)
- [Pendlay Rows](#)
- [Overhead Press](#)
- [Deadlifts](#)
- [Face Pulls](#) or [Bent Over Lateral Raises](#)
- [Bicep Curls](#)

“How many days per week is this routine? How many times per day?”

MYx8 is done on 3 non-consecutive days per week. That is, you must have at least one day of rest between workouts. The most common way to set up the workout is by using a Mon/Wed/Fri workout schedule...

...However, Tue/Thu/Sat, Wed/Fri/Sun, Thu/Sat/Mon, Fri/Sun/Tue, Sat/Mon/Wed or Sun/Tue/Thu are all fine choices. Use whichever schedule caters best to you.

As to how many times per day, there is only one workout per day. So, that comes to a grand total of... 3 workout sessions per week.

“How long should each workout take?”

They're meant to be short and sweet (well, maybe not so much sweet). Excluding your initial warm up, each workout session should take about 30-50 minutes depending on your stage of development...

...That is, it should take closer to 30 minutes when you first start and closer to 45-50 minutes when you are several weeks or months in. This is because you'll have to take longer breaks between work sets as you get stronger. Thus, your workout times will increase accordingly.

As long as you adhere to the following guidelines, you won't have to worry about taking too long:

- **No Pussyfooting.** Pussyfooting means to beat around the bush or act indecisively. Pussyfooters don't get results. Give it your all or get the hell out. And be direct. If someone's just sitting on a bench that you need, be direct and ask them to get up, instead of waiting around until they decide to move. Or if someone's actually *using* the equipment you need, ask to work in with them.
- **No Lollygagging.** Although similar to pussyfooting, lollygagging is a distinct “no-no” of its own. Lollygaggers train without purpose and waste time doing nothing, when they could be on to the next set. They aimlessly drift from exercise to exercise without any goal in mind, and they are void of any concept of time.
- **No Yakety Yakking.** No talking, chit-chatting, gossiping, or otherwise moving your lips while simultaneously activating your vocal cords unless it is to ask for a spot, grunt or reprimand someone taking your equipment. And for the love of god, do not take phone calls in the gym.
- **No Rubbernecking.** Don't gawk at some huge dude doing sets of squats with an eleventy-bazillion lbs. It gets you nowhere, and I can guarantee he didn't get to where he is now by “lifting vicariously” through others. Instead, get in your zone, meditate and focus on you. Distraction is a killer. Snoop Dogg agrees:



[Image Credit: Dmitry Valberg](#)

“Stay to your own. Get your own. Namsayin’? Be Independent...”

– Snoop Dogg

“Why is there an emphasis on pulling exercises?”

I know I already discussed that this routine provides unique benefits compared to other popular routines, because it emphasizes pulling, rather than pushing exercises – But I didn't really explain *why* it works. Below are the explanations of why MYx8 can offer each of these unique benefits.

1. **Back > Chest + Shoulders.** Compare the size of the chest and shoulders muscles (the main muscle groups used in pushing exercises) to the size of the back muscles (the main muscle groups used in pulling exercises). The chest and shoulders, combined, are smaller. So it doesn't make sense to give them a disproportionate amount of work just because they are the muscles you see when looking in the mirror.
2. **Counteract Slouching Posture.** People, especially those in industrialized societies, tend to sit down a lot – while at work, at school, hunched over at the computer, watching TV, driving, eating... you name it. All this sitting down leads to poor posture, where your back muscles are weak and stretched out, while your chest and shoulder muscles are tight and pulled forward. Tight hip flexors are also a common part of this postural deficiency. One way to help correct or prevent this issue is to do more pulling exercises than pushing exercises. This produces a more even balance of strength between your front and back muscles.
3. **Back Exercises Are Difficult.** Back exercises are harder to learn. And so, you need to do them more often to “teach” your body the right technique, as quickly as possible. This is not to say that the bench press and overhead press are like a walk in the park, because they aren't. But compared to inverted rows/pull ups and Pendlay rows, they are. Inverted rows or pull ups, while not overly difficult in terms of technique, are quite challenging since you must lift, maneuver and balance your entire bodyweight. This introduces a new dynamic compared to simply moving a weight, with your body in a fixed position. Pendlay rows, **on**

the other hand, are a technically difficult exercise. You have to diligently practice correct technique so that you are lifting with your back muscles, as opposed to just using your arms. Implementing specific exercises (i.e. face pulls or bent over lateral raises) lets you speed up your mastery of the Pendlay row technique by teaching you how to activate your rear delts and middle/lower trapezius fibers.

“What tempo should I be lifting at?”

I want to make a big point of saying this: Don't get stressed about tempo.

Yes, you can quantify the tempo, too, but that requires counting in your head. That will distract you from focusing 100% on the lift.

So don't bother counting during your work sets. You'll be fine if you can maintain control over the weight and follow these 4 basic rules...

1. **Maintain Intense Focus**
2. **Lift Fast** (*except on face pulls/bent over lateral raises*)
3. **Lower Slowly**
4. **Use Proper Technique**

...That said, the ideal tempo is anywhere between a *10X1* to a *20X1* tempo. In other words:

- **Negative Rep.** Take 1 to 2 seconds on the negative.
- **Bottom.** Don't pause at the bottom of the rep (but don't “bounce” either).
- **Positive Rep.** Explode up *as fast as possible* (except on face pulls/bent over lateral raises). Depending on the heaviness, this could be ½ a second or 3.
- **Top.** Pause for about one second at the top of the rep.

Feel free to practice this tempo during your warm up sets by counting to yourself, since warm up sets do not require complete focus. This is enough to “tune” your body so that, after a while, you'll use the correct tempo during your work sets without even thinking about it.

“How should I warm up?”

I'm glad you asked.

Use the [three phase warm up routine](#) as a guide for what to do leading into the first exercise, squats. The three phase warm up includes 5 minutes of light cardio followed by stretching and then warm up sets.

As a general guideline, complete 8 reps using about ½ of your work set weight for the first warm up set of a given exercise. Increase the weight and decrease the reps for subsequent warm up sets – With the final warm up set being done using about ¾ or more of your work set weight for 4 or fewer reps.

I recommend a 3 warm up sets for squats, to start with.

With the exceptions of inverted rows/pull ups, face pulls/bent over lateral raises and bicep curls, you should only need 1 (maybe 2) warm up sets per exercise for all other exercises – Inverted rows/pull ups, face pulls/bent over lateral raises and bicep curls don't require any warm up sets.

If you feel that you may need more warm up sets to prepare for the work sets, then you should go with your gut feeling.

And as you get stronger, you will need to increase the number of warm up sets for any given exercise, in order to prepare your body for the heavier loads – Think about it: A guy who squats 225 lbs. will need more warm up sets than a guy who squats 115 lbs.

For any rapscallions out there thinking of half-assing or completely skipping out on warm ups, know that it *will* catch up with you (spoken from experience).

The immediate effect of failing to warm up correctly is that you'll be weaker on all your lifts in that session. But in the long term, if you make it a habit of skipping warm ups, then it's only a matter of time before it comes back to bite you in the ass (...or the lower back, shoulders, neck, groin, etc.).

Even the guy on the \$100 bill agrees with me!...



“By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail.”

– Ben Franklin

“How long should I rest between warm up sets?”

Rest between warm up sets should be brief since you should only be doing enough work to warm up a given group of muscles and prepare your joints for the work set weight. You are *not* fatiguing your muscles.

Take *only* as long as you need in order to avoid muscle fatigue.

I'd estimate that 30 to 45 seconds is all the rest that most folks will need between warm up sets – One minute maximum. You should feel fresh and ready to go for the next warm up set. If you feel you need more time than this, chances are you are using too many reps and/or lifting too heavy.

“What do I do for the first workouts?”

The point of the first two workouts is simply to get your starting weights. You will not be doing all the sets as laid out in the workout template.

Although these first two workouts are important, you shouldn't worry excessively about making everything “perfect.” If you overestimate or underestimate your lifts, it's not the end of the world – You'll naturally correct this during the next workouts.

How to Test & Find Your Starting Weights. Figure out what your starting weights are by doing the following:

- **Start Light.** Begin with just the bar (45 lbs) and do a set of 8 reps for all the barbell lifts. Depending on your strength, you may need to with a lighter bar for bicep curls. For inverted rows or pull ups, start with your bodyweight. For face pulls or bent over lateral raises, start with light weight and do 12-16 reps.
- **Monitor Bar Speed.** Pay attention to the speed of the bar/weight as you lift *up*.
- **Add Weight.** Add 10 lbs more and do another set. Keep adding 10 lbs per set *until* the speed of the barbell slows down *or* until your form deteriorates.
- **Calculate.** Your starting weight is 5 lbs *less* than the weight you lift when your bar speed decreases/your form breaks down. (If you were wondering, it's 5 lbs because that is the average difference between the previous, successful, set and the final, failed, set.

Testing Starting Weights – Example

If the bar speed decreased or your form started to falter when are lifting, let's say, 95 lbs on any given lift, then your starting weight for this lift is 90 lbs. (90 lbs is halfway between 95 lbs and 85 lbs.)

Now that you know how to find your starting lifts, I'll explain what beginners should do in the first two workouts and beyond...

Session 1 - Workout A:

- **Squats.** Warm up with some light cardio and stretching. Then, test your weight for squats. Once you find this weight, write it down and move on to the bench press.
- **Bench Press.** Test and find your weight for bench press. Write it down and move on to Pendlay rows.
- **Pendlay Rows.** Test and find your weight for Pendlay rows. Write it down and move on to deadlifts.
- **Deadlifts.** Test and find your weight for Pendlay rows. Write it down and move on to bent over lateral raises/face pulls.
- **Bent Over Laterals or Face Pulls.** Decide which exercise is more feasible, since you can only choose one or the other. Test your weight and write it down – You're now done with your first workout session. Congrats!

Session 2 - Workout B:

- **Squats.** Do your general warm up and stretching. Since you've already calculated the starting weight, you're going to go through with this exercise as directed in the template (i.e. 3 sets of 8). You'll use your starting weight in all 3 work sets. But first, start with a warm up set of 8 reps using about 1/2 of your work set weight or just the bar – whichever is heavier. Then do another warm up set of 4 reps with about 3/4 of your work set weight or just the bar – whichever is heavier. Finally, proceed to do all 3 work sets (again, all with the same weight).
- **Inverted Rows or Pull Ups.** Decide which exercise is more feasible, since you can only choose one or the other. Test and find your weight and write it down (it's okay if you can only use your bodyweight). Move on to the overhead press.
- **Overhead Press.** Test and find your weight for the overhead press. Write it down and move on to deadlifts.
- **Deadlifts.** Since you've already calculated the starting weight, you're going to go through with this exercise as directed in the template (i.e. 2 sets of 8). You'll use the starting weight that you found in the first session for both work sets. But first, start with a warm up set of 8 reps using about 1/2 of your work set weight or just the bar – whichever is heavier. Then do another warm up set of 4 reps with about 3/4 of your work set weight or just the bar – whichever is heavier. Finally, proceed to do both work sets (again, all with the same weight).
- **Bicep Curls.** Test and find your weight for bicep curls. Write it down and – Shazam! You're done the testing workouts.

Sessions 3 & 4:

Use your starting weights for all exercises, except squats and deadlifts – You should increase squats and deadlifts by 5-10 lbs since you already trained with the starting weights in session 2.

Sessions 5 & Beyond:

Increase the weights for *all* exercises from workout to workout, as fast as possible (without sacrificing good form).

“How much weight should I add each workout?”

I touched upon this in the previous question, but I’ll talk about it some more.

Initially, this should be anywhere from a 5-10 pound increase per workout, depending on the lift. However, you shouldn’t become “number-bound.”

You’ll be fine as long as you follow the golden rule:

Add as much weight as you possibly can from workout to workout, **without** interfering with proper technique.

*“He who moves not forward, goes backward.”
– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

“Can I do forced reps or controlled cheating?”

No.

Forced reps and controlled cheating are training techniques best left to experienced lifters. They're unfit for, an unneeded in, this routine.

For anyone who doesn’t know what either of these mean, I’ll provide a quick description of each so you know what *not* to do.

- **Forced Reps.** This technique involves using a spotter to assist you with 1 or more additional repetitions in a set, after you are no longer able to do any more reps by yourself. Don't confuse this training technique with using a spotter to help you re-rack a weight after failure (which is how you *should* use a spotter). Forced reps don't help you get stronger; they only fatigue you.
- **Controlled Cheating.** Also known as “cheat reps,” this involves using modified, but technically *improper* form in a controlled fashion. The purpose is to lift more by “kind of” cheating so you’re you can overload the muscles to a greater extent than you could if you were using strict form. Controlled cheating is only effective once you have mastered strict exercise technique. Otherwise, you have “no point of reference” for cheating, thereby risking injury.

“How 'strict' should my form be?”

In the previous question, I discussed controlled cheating and why you shouldn't do them in this routine...

...But that begs the question of whether or not you should use 100% strict form on every single repetition. The short answer is no, you don't have to use completely strict form for every single rep.

Now here's the long answer. There is a difference between controlled cheating and using form that isn't totally strict. Controlled cheating involves a deliberate and obvious change in form, while “using form that isn't totally strict” (I'll give this a better name in a second) isn't as noticeable and it's not deliberate.

In at least the first several weeks of the routine, until you are very confident of your ability to properly execute the exercise techniques, you should always strive to use *completely* strict form. This is essential for teaching your body the correct movement.

If you stray away from learning strict technique in beginner stage, you will actually be teaching yourself improper form, which you'll continue to reinforce every workout from that point onward; thus making slowed progress and injuries or muscle imbalances an inevitability.

However, the scenario changes slightly once you're capable of executing each exercise technique with strict form and are getting to significantly heavier weights. While you should always aim to use strict form whenever *possible*, it may be necessary to use somewhat less-than-perfect form, or **acceptable form**. This is simply necessary for getting stronger.

Acceptable Form – Definition

I define acceptable form as performing a lift at *no less* than 80% of strict form. Acceptable form doesn't involve deliberate, specific changes to the technique (like controlled cheating does). Instead, it involves a very slight, "natural" deviation from completely strict form. It becomes *unacceptable* when your form degrades to the point that it makes you noticeably more vulnerable to injury at any point throughout the movement.

Use this test: If you think may be pushing yourself too far, then you probably are.

Don't get it twisted, though – This is NOT me saying it's okay use sloppy form, at any point.

Be honest with yourself. If you can't be positive that you know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable form, then you will be more successful by adhering to strict form-only approach. There's nothing wrong with this; it simply means you need more time perfecting the techniques.

I know I stress the importance of technique in this document (as well as throughout the entire site) – I don't do this because I like beating proverbial dead horses. I do it because using proper technique is *essential* for achieving any goal in the gym...

...And I do it because most newbies need this information repeatedly shoved through their thick skulls in order for it to have any chance of sticking. No offense to the few of you trainees out there who *don't* constantly need this information reinforced. :-D

I strongly advise everyone doing this routine to “drop their ego” before entering the weight room. You're not here to impress anyone (including yourself) with how much weight you can lift. You're here to learn how to lift weights *the right way*.

Trust me, it's extremely obvious when a wannabe tough guy who just joined the gym tries to use weight that's way too heavy for him; typically done on the bench press. Maybe he feels a need to show that he can “hold his own,” but he's really just fooling himself...

...It's actually embarrassing to watch, and I cringe every time my eyes happen to befall such a horrid scene – So, please, for your own sake, and also for the sake of anyone watching, don't be that guy. Instead, think of technique as being the most impressive part of a lift (which it is!). Imagine the following scenario:

Importance of Technique – Scenario

Okay, so you're in the gym, doing the most ego-provoking exercise to have ever existed: The bench press. You're doing your work sets with, let's say, a modest 115 lbs. As you methodically crank out rep after rep of exquisitely precise technique, one of the gym-goons saunters up to the bench next to you, slaps on 315 lbs, and proceeds to convulse his way through a rivetingly unique interpretation of what could only be described as bench pressing if you squinted your eyes and cocked your head sideways while inebriated ([see this video](#)). Anyone with an inkling of knowledge about weight training would recognize you as the better trainee. Nobody (of importance) cares that one guy is stronger than another – *especially* if his form is sloppier than a used diaper.

Even after you've developed great form, though, it's important to *always* strive to improve upon it. Every single pro powerlifter, bodybuilder and Olympic weightlifter needs to monitor and work on his technique.

To sum up this long answer/rant about technique, I'll leave you with this (metaphorically) relevant quote:

"It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it."

– Lena Horne, Singer

“Should I go to failure on any/all sets?”

Try not to in the first couple or few weeks. During these initial weeks of training, resist the urge to go for another rep if you think that doing so will cause you to fail.

When you do end up training to failure, it should only be done on the last work set of the exercise. If failure occurs *before* the last set, then the weight is too heavy or you didn't rest long enough between sets.

“How long should I wait between sets and exercises?”

In the first couple or few weeks, you should only need about 1-2 minutes between sets. You should only need about one minute when transitioning between exercises, unless you are completely winded from the previous exercise. Most of the time, you should be ready by the time you finish un-racking the weight for the first exercise and finish adding the weight for the next exercise.

However, you'll need more rest time to sufficiently recover between sets as your strength skyrockets over the ensuing months of training. About 1 ½ to 2 ½ minutes of rest between sets should be sufficient on most exercises, for most people. But you may need up to 4 minutes of rest after sets of heavy squats and deadlifts.

“If the first work set is too difficult, should I decrease the weight for the following sets?”

Yes.

Unless you didn't warm up sufficiently, then an extremely difficult first set means that the following sets will be even more difficult. It's pointless to struggle through an exercise when you can't perform all the reps in the sets. It will only lead to you learning improper technique and possibly getting a nice injury or three.

This situation will likely arise if you overestimated your starting weights for the lifts during the initial sessions. The fix is simply to reduce the load and progress in smaller weight increments from this point onward.

Or the set might be too difficult if you are simply having a bad day. Maybe you're sick, tired, didn't eat enough food, got poor sleep the night before, or any number of things – Whatever, shit happens – Just make a note in your workout log, fix whatever the problem was and play it by ear the next workout when deciding what weight to use.

“If the first work set is easy, should I increase the weight for the following sets?”

No.

The first work set should be relatively easy. The 2nd and/or 3rd sets will be more challenging. And if the last set is super easy, then just leave a note in your workout log and try increasing the weight more than usual for the next workout.

As long as you were reasonably accurate in estimating your starting weights and have been progressively increasing the loads, then this won't be an issue.

If you think the weights you used in the initial sessions were way too light, then there's still no need to worry. You just have add more weight in the next workouts to compensate for it.

“When and how should I use a spotter?”

You should use a spotter for the bench press and squat exercises only. Spots are completely unnecessary on all other exercises in the routine.

How to Spot. Explained below are three basic ways you can get a spot.

- **Power Rack.** You don't even need a spotter for the squat and bench press if you have a power rack. Power racks have adjustable safety pins that allow you to safely lift without an actual spotter. You simply set the pins so that they will stop the bar at the bottom of the range of motion. That way, the pins will prevent you from being crushed by the weight if you fail. This method can be used in combination with “human spotter” method, below...
- **Human Spotter.** If you don't have a power rack, then you can always go with the good ol' fashioned human spotter. Have someone get behind you and diligently watch you go through the technique. The only times the spotter should intervene is if you signal them to do so, if it's obvious that you can't finish a rep or if you are pinned underneath the bar!
- **Power Rack + Human Spotter.** If you're ever lifting weights that are really heavy for you (not likely with MYx8 because of the moderate rep scheme), then it's a good idea to be extra caution and use a power rack *and* a real live person. The rack prevents the bar from crushing you, while the spotter can prevent injuries more likely to occur if you were to fail in the middle of a rep (e.g. straining or pulling a muscle).



Safety in the gym is important. When you're lifting heavy weights over and on top of your body, it's always a smart idea to take the necessary precautions. [These guys all agree.](#)

“Better a thousand times careful than once dead.”

– (Proverb)

“What if I can’t handle doing so many sets each workout?”

This shouldn’t be a problem for *vast majority* of people doing this routine.

Understand that this MYx8 is supposed to be challenging. If getting strong and muscular was a cakewalk, then everyone and his grandpa would be walking around, looking like Arnold in his prime.

However, if the amount of work per workout *truly* interferes with your exercise technique and your ability to progress in strength between workouts, then it’s okay to make some small changes.

Buuut... be sure that any inability to progress in strength and properly complete workouts is *not* due to something else, such as: using too much weight and going to failure, inadequate sleep, inadequate rest between sets, bad diet, etc. If you are indeed doing everything correctly, but still having issues, then here is your solution.

- **Solution.** Simply decrease the number of sets per exercise by **1 set** (e.g. instead of 3 sets of squats, do 2). Do this only after performing the workout in its entirety for 2 full weeks. You should do this modified routine for only 2-3 weeks, after which you must transition back to the original, unmodified routine.

Again, most people should be able to complete all sets without any major problems. Those who will actually qualify for reducing the number of sets those who have very poor conditioning and general fitness levels. Everyone else (i.e. 99%+ of people reading this), please resist the temptation to be lazy.

MODIFICATIONS, EXCEPTIONS & WHAT-IF'S

“Can I change the order of exercises?”

No.

If there were any better way to order the exercises, then I would have ordered them that way. This order allows for the most efficient transition between exercises and minimizes any interference that one exercise might have on another exercise.

“I don't have equipment for inverted rows, but I suck at pull ups. Help!”

If you can't get access to the equipment needed for inverted rows, but suck at doing pull ups, don't fret.

Assisted or modified pull ups are the solution you've been waiting for!

Pull Ups Made Easy(er). Ideally these should be done in 3 sets of 8 reps, but it's okay if you need to do the 24 reps spread over more sets (no more than 6 sets if possible). Below are examples of various assisted pull ups and modified pull ups. Since some are easier than others, you should choose the one that's most challenging, but still allows you to complete all the reps in a reasonable number of sets.

- **Band-Assisted Pull Ups.** This is the most preferred assisted pull up variation because it's very versatile and mimics the pull up range of motion most accurately – And it works for just about everyone. It involves hanging a resistance band from the pull up bar and looping it around your knees to support your weight. You can adjust the resistance, so that the band provides you with a lot, or just a little help. It lets you go through the entire range of motion, while still having to use your stabilizer muscles for balance (unlike with machine-assisted pull ups).
- **Kipping Pull Ups.** Kipping pull ups are useful if you already have the strength to do a few regular pull ups on your own. These modified pull ups entail generating momentum by swinging your hips, legs, and arms to bring you through the motion.
- **Jumping Pull Ups.** This option is suitable for those who already have a decent level of general fitness, and who are able to do at least one regular pull up. The idea is to jump up and give your body just enough momentum to carry you through the positive rep. Then, concentrate on performing the negative rep by slowly lowering yourself down.
- **Negatives.** Negatives are the lowering portion of the repetition. Depending on your specific set up, you can you'll need a platform of some type that is tall enough for you to get your head above the bar. From here, you will assume the position at the top of the rep, hold it for a second and do the negative by slowly lowering your body. Then quickly stand back on the platform in the starting position. This option is great for those who don't have access to a band for band-assisted pull ups.
- **NO Lat Pull Downs & NO Machine-Assisted Pull Ups.** Lat pull downs and machine assisted pull ups are the lazy man's approach to the pull up. They defeat the purpose of doing pull ups, since they take away the hard part of balancing yourself and freely maneuvering your body. This the lazy man's way out, and should only be used as a *very* last resort.

“What if bodyweight inverted rows or pull ups are too easy?”

Although 3 sets of 8 reps will be challenging for many people, it will seem like a walk in the park for the more athletic folks doing this routine.

The solution is easy - Add weight! Depending on which exercise you're doing, below are your options for either inverted rows or pull ups.

- **Weighted Pull Ups.** Get a pull up belt (also known as a dip belt), put it around your waist and attach it to the chain. Alternatively, you can purchase an adjustable weighted vest like the Xvest. Or you can get creative and use Iron Woody bands to add elastic resistance. Cheaper alternatives are to hold a dumbbell between your ankles or to wear a backpack filled with weights.
- **Weighted Inverted Rows.** Before adding any weight, the easiest way to increase resistance on this exercise is to elevate your feet higher by using a taller box. To add weight, the classic method is to load plates on your torso, although this can be a balancing act. Similarly, you can drape chains across your torso. The easiest, but most expensive method, is to use an adjustable weighted vest, such as the Xvest. You can also do band resisted inverted rows with the help of Iron Woody bands.

“Can I change the exercises?”

The answer is no for most people.

But there are two exceptions: If you have significant flexibility issues or injuries that prevent you from learning proper form, or if you lack the proper equipment and there is no way to improvise.

Alternatives. Below are some alternative exercises for each lift. Only use an alternative if you don't have the required equipment or if performing the default exercise puts you at high risk for injury because of prior injuries or major flexibility issues (which you can work on to fix).

- **Squat Alternatives.** Split squats, leg press, or hack squats.
- **Bench Press Alternatives.** Dips, weighted pushups or neutral-grip dumbbell bench press.
- **Pull Up Alternatives.** Please see [the question before last](#).
- **Overhead Press Alternatives.** Neutral-grip dumbbell press or machine shoulder press.
- **Deadlift Alternatives.** Romanian Deadlifts, also known as RDLs.

And just to make myself crystal clear, these alternatives are not to be resorted to for reasons like “Squats make my legs really sore” or “Deadlifts give me calluses.”

“Can I add extra exercises?”

No.

Adding more exercises will do nothing but make the routine more complicated *and* less effective.

There will be plenty of time to add exercises in the future. For now, you must abide by the K.I.S.S. principle: Keep It Simple, Stupid.

“Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.”

– Confucius

Adding more exercises would actually interfere with your progress on the existing exercises. Therefore, you'd be defeating the purpose of the whole routine if you went against the advice.

It's common for beginners to want to add extra exercises, especially for your biceps and triceps. It seems that doing so is logical and would lead to you building huge pythons that make girls flock to you like they do in Axe commercial...

...But, just because it seems to make sense, doesn't mean that it actually works. Here's the bleak reality of what will happen if you decide to break protocol and add more exercises...

1. Your major lifts suffer will because the new exercises cut into your recovery; and by extension, your ability to learn proper technique and gain strength is impaired.
2. By adding in more work (especially more direct arm work), you will slow the progress of your arm size gains in both the long-term and the short-term. A lose-lose situation.
 - **Short-Term.** By adding direct arm work that interferes with your ability to perform the major lifts, your major lifts in turn will interfere with your arm development... quite the vicious cycle.
 - **Long-Term.** The big lifts all involve your arm muscles (even the squat, somewhat). Therefore, by holding back the progress on the big lifts, you are inhibiting your arm strength. You can't [build bigger arms](#) by inhibiting your arm strength because that makes it more difficult to achieve [progressive overload](#).
3. You will end up homeless, jobless, penniless and you'll smell bad, too. You'll have no friends, in real life or even on Facebook. Those stray cats – the ones you consider to be your “roommates” because you all live in the same cardboard box shelter – won't even respect you. Oh yeah, and you'll be banned from all gyms. You'll never again step foot in a weight room... Ever! (You think I'm joking, don't you? Maybe I am, but are you really willing to *risk it all* to find out?)

“Can I do extra exercises... on the rest days?”

No.

Rest days are for rest only.

These days are crucial for ensuring you get quality recovery between workout sessions. Instead, you can exercise your mind by re-reading this guide and/or browsing through the troves of stimulating information and learning material on the [MyWeightLifting.com](#) site!

“I'm sore from my last session. Should I still workout, or wait another day?”

You are likely to be the sorest after workouts during the first week or two of the routine. This is normal, and it will eventually stop once your body becomes more accustomed to repeatedly lifting heavy objects.

Soreness, or more specifically, Delayed Onset Muscle Syndrome (DOMS), does not necessarily mean that you are not sufficiently recovered or are unable to perform. As long as you get decent sleep, you'll be fine. Just ignore the soreness and keep your mind on the lifts.

“What do I do if I have to skip a workout?”

Don't do it...

...But if you *really* have to, then it better be for serious reason. No lame excuses. Now is the time to form the habit of [consistency](#) – Unless of course you were hoping for a future of mediocrity.

“Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.”

– George Washington Carver

“Will results go away if I stop working out? Will the muscle turn into fat?”

Yes to the first part and no to the second part.

Yes, your results will gradually fade away if you stop working out. You gotta understand that this isn't a onetime thing. Weight lifting – being strong and looking good – is a lifestyle.

It's a common myth that once you stop working out, your muscles will somehow magically transform into fat. This is non-sense.

This silly myth probably came into existence because a lot guys who weight train for sports, turn into fatties after they retire and stop lifting. This doesn't happen because their muscles just up and decide to ooze into a puddle of fat. It happens for three reasons...

- A lack of weight training, which causes their muscle mass to decrease.
- A poor diet, which likely consists of the same high calorie intake they had as an athlete.
- A less active lifestyle in general (i.e. no practices, drills, cardio, etc.).

These three factors cause a surplus of calories that are converted to fat since. And that is what leads all too many former athletes to slowly, but surely morph into Michelin Man lookalikes.

EQUIPMENT, APPAREL, SUPPLEMENTS & LOGS

“What equipment do I need?”

All the required equipment should be readily available at any halfway-decent gym.

No worries if you can't, or don't want to, go to a gym. You can build a home gym at a relatively affordable price. Here's the minimum equipment required for the MYx8 routine.

- Power rack
- Flat or adjustable bench
- 300+ lbs. Olympic weight set (barbell, plates & 2 weight collars)
- Cable pulleys or resistance bands (for face pulls) – *Or* dumbbells (for bent over lateral raises)

“How much will it cost me?”

Well, the routine is completely free! You're welcome in advance for that. ;-D

The only costs involved are a membership fee if you decide to join a gym; or the cost of equipment if you decide to build a home gym.

Gym Membership Price. Gym membership can vary from super cheap to very expensive. Here's a couple of price benchmarks.

- Planet Fitness (*not* recommended) - \$7/month
- Gold's Gym - \$30-40/month
- YMCA - \$30-45/month
- High School or University Gyms - Free or cheap for students, usually

Home Gym Price. Here's a breakdown of what you might expect to pay for each piece of equipment.

- Flat or adjustable bench - \$150
- Power rack - \$400+
- 300+ lbs. Olympic weight set (barbell & weight plates) - \$200+
- 2 weight collars (typically included with weight set) - \$8
- Adjustable dumbbells *or* resistance bands (e.g. Iron Woody) - \$75-80

I urge you to shop around and look through craigslist.org for bargains, if price is an issue.

“Do I need any special clothing or footwear?”

You gotta “dress for success” in the gym. But that doesn't mean you have to get all decked out in the latest and greatest fitness apparel. It just means you have to be comfortable and able to move around freely with clothes that won't get in the way.

I'm guessing that most people will already have many of the needed items anyway. Your fitness wardrobe should include...

- Athletic shorts
- Athletic/Sweat pants
- T-shirts or tank tops
- Flat-soled shoes (Chuck Taylors by Converse)

“Do I need any special gym accessories?”

Nope.

You don't *need* any special gym accessories to do this routine. But you may want to consider a few items for your convenience...

...I've compiled two lists: One for gym accessories that you *may* want to buy for this routine ("Maybe List"); and another list for items that you should *not* consider buying now, but that you may find helpful in the future ("Maybe-Later List").

Maybe List. Below is a list of gym accessories that aren't required, but that you might find useful. You might even have a couple of these items already...

- **Lifting Chalk.** Chalk can turn your palms from slippery clam hands to bone-dry gripping machines in an instant. This can be especially crucial on heavy deadlifts. But chalk's magic also extends to helping you with inverted rows/pull ups and bent over rows. But beware, many commercial gyms are lame and don't allow chalk. A quick tip: avoid wearing dark shirts when using chalk, unless you want to look like the asphalt on an elementary school playground.
- **Towels.** Most gyms will provide free towels. My gym is supposed to have that service, although they seem to be conveniently out of towels whenever I'm enjoying a sweat drenched workout (which happens most of the time). Conspiracy? Sadly, the world will never know...
- **Gym Bag.** Gym bags are essential if you plan to change before or after your workout. But they're also handy for carrying other items you may have with you like a workout log, water bottle, chalk, towels, dipping belt, phone, keys, miniature poodle, etc.
- **Pull Up Belt.** Pull up belts, also called dipping belts, are used to add weight to your body for weighted pull ups, pull ups or dips. You put it around your waist, attach the desired amount of weight to the chain and then secure it. For MYx8, it would be useful only if you decided to pull ups instead of inverted rows.
- **iPod/Mp3 Player.** This one is absolutely essential for me. It helps me get in the right zone. But more importantly it blocks out all other distractions, including the incessant pre-teen pop music that's always polluting my gym's atmosphere... No offense to any Miley Cyrus fans out there.

Maybe-Later List. Although you might find some of these items useful down the road, there's really no use for these as a beginner on MYx8...

- **Gloves.** Lifting gloves help to support your grip and prevent formation of calluses from deadlifting. But they're usually unnecessary. Just use your bare hands from the start and you'll soon have a tough grip that can endure the heavy weight. Gloves can be great, though, if you've somehow managed to rip off a callus and expose the raw skin underneath.
- **Straps.** Straps are another grip device, often used for deadlifts. You put it around your wrist and wrap it around the bar to make holding the bar easier. Again, you shouldn't need this if you start by training with your bare hands only. They may be useful in the future if your pulling strength and body endurance outperforms your grip strength and endurance. If that day ever comes, then go ahead and try them out.
- **Weight Lifting Belt.** Weight lifting belts are most effectively used during very heavy lifts (e.g. 1 rep maxes on squats, deadlifts, or even bench). When used correctly, they help support the lower back and protect it from acute stress. It's a great investment, but you need not consider it until you're done with MYx8.

“Do I have to take any supplements? Can I?”

Note

Please note that "supplements" refers *legal* dietary supplements. It does not refer to steroids, pro-hormones, HGH, and so on (although I'll talk about these later).



No, you don't have to take any supplements to see great muscle building and strength results with this routine!

If you do MYx8 as outlined, adhere to your diet plan, get plenty of sleep, and take zero supplements, your results will be nothing short of impressive. People may even start asking if you're on *steroids*, let alone supplements.

But what if you *want* to take supplements? That's fine, but focus on your training and diet first. Once you get the hang of that, then you can consider some basic supplements.

Supplements can only help to an extent – They won't make or break you. To give you an analogy, supplements are like the icing on a cake. But you must first have a cake before you can put the icing on.

“I want to do steroids or pro-hormones while on this routine. Can I? Should I?”

Off the bat, my answer is a resounding NO.

And in the likely case that someone will ask...

...No, I do not and have not taken steroids, pro-hormones, HGH or any other illegal performance enhancing drug. I figure that you deserve to know that about the person who's supplying you advice on weight lifting.

I believe that being natural is more fulfilling, less worrisome and not as volatile.

That said, I'm not going to pass judgment on users of anabolics, as long as they are adults and not using it to cheat in a sport or competition.

But just because I won't pass judgment, it does not mean that I condone it.

In particular, I actually very strongly oppose the use of steroids by those who have absolutely no basis for even considering them. This includes:

- Anyone under the age of 25 (so as not to interfere with growth, etc.)
- Those with *insufficient* training experience (several years), who are *not* considered advanced or elite
- Those who have *not* approached their *actual* “genetic potential” for muscle mass or strength
- Those who are *unaware* of the potential risks or side effects
- Those who do *not* know the “proper” method for administering the drugs and post-cycle treatments
- Those who have *not* gotten medical tests done beforehand to screen for relevant preexisting health issues

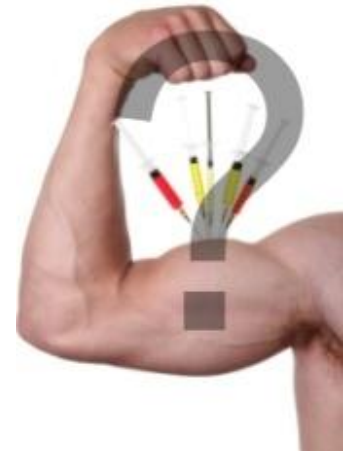
If you fall into one or more of the above categories, and are considering using, then...

[...Performance enhancing drugs are bad, mmmkay.](#)

“Should I use a workout log?”

Yes!

A workout log is essential to your success. The only exception to this is if you're like Rain Man and are able to track and analyze all the numbers for your lifts in your head.



As Lord Kelvin (the guy who “invented” absolute zero) famously said:

“If you cannot track it, you cannot improve it.”
– Lord Kelvin

Kelvin would have been a great lifter!

A log is the ultimate tracking device for your workouts. It enables you to track your lifts over time. This is obviously helpful for seeing how much you should increase or decrease a lift, based on the previous session...

...But the best and least-exploited benefit of keeping a workout log is the ability to analyze the data over weeks, months or years. You can spot trends and see how certain changes you made affected your progress.

This is powerful because it has the potential to provide insight into what works and what doesn't work well for you. You can *accurately* identify and eliminate problems in your training, diet or sleep that would have otherwise gone unnoticed until much later.