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Visual Impact Muscle Building for Men Phase 1 Review

Visual Impact Phase 1: Grow Some New Muscles

This review will build upon the information already presented in these two articles:

- [Visual Impact theory](#)
- [Visual Impact practice](#)

So what I am aiming to do with this article is add to the information already available and make a connection with other people who are doing this program, or those who are thinking about doing it and want to know about the experiences of others.

I'm going to encourage commenters to put their thoughts, experiences and questions in the comments section. Speak your mind...

[caption id="attachment_1789" align="aligncenter" width="300" caption="Elvis Wants Your Thoughts!"]



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Where Was I?

Before I started this routine I had two weeks off heavy lifting. I had been doing a myo-reps routine for 6 weeks whilst arranging my diet to promote weight loss. This year has been a good year for lifting, with my routines helping me hit new PB's on several lifts, whilst avoiding major injury (always a danger when training hard). One thing that I had been thinking during my last cycle was that my body felt like it was ready to start 'pumping' some weights again.

For those of you who don't know about myo-reps, it's a system that uses only 1 full set of reps per exercise (to develop full muscle 'activation'), and allows only enough recovery time to perform some more 'activated' reps. The basic schedule is this: do a full work set, rest 15-25 secs then do 1-5 more reps (depending on the weight you start with), rest 15-25 secs and repeat until either your quality of lifting decreases, or you're unable to do any more reps. For a more full explanation of myo-reps, [click here](#).

Also this year I have been focused on training myself only for visual purposes (all my previous training has been directed at producing performance, not physique development), and, for the first time ever I have been able to see my abs! For someone with pretty poor natural abs (I remember a trainer I used to work with who would have the outline of a 6 pack even when he was up in the high teens for body fat percentage), being able to see, and feel, my abs has been very rewarding for the time and effort put in.

Back to 'pumping'.

Why this type of workout?

One thing that the myo-reps routines are great for is producing myofibrillar hypertrophy. So whilst my muscles have been looking harder as the year has progressed, but that type of progress comes at the cost of the other main set of structures being built. What other structures? Those that are grouped under 'sarcoplasmic hypertrophy'.

Essentially sarcoplasmic hypertrophy is promoted when you take the muscle toward exhaustion with repeated sets of medium to high reps. You can think of this as being like draining the muscle repeatedly. All this draining takes energy, and produces lots of metabolic waste products, and both of these require lots of blood and fluid to be used and shifted. It's that blood that you feel when your muscles are 'pumped'. The error that many gym users make is only ever training one type of muscle growth. They either get hooked on myofibrillar hypertrophy, or they prefer the development and feeling of sarcoplasmic hypertrophy.

If there is one weakness to myo-reps as a year round routine it's this: That it mainly promotes one type of hypertrophy, myofibrillar hypertrophy.

So what options do we have to promote the other type of muscle growth, sarcoplasmic hypertrophy?

Some well known programs are:

- HIT (high intensity training, which I only use as a short term program when other programs have been exhausted or didn't produce results).
- EDT (Escalating Density Training, by Charles Staley ([get your copy here](#)). I really like this program as it's very good for Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy, and was going to use it before finding Visual Impact Muscle Building)
- German Volume Training (10 sets of 10)
- Most Bodybuilding 'Split Routines'.
- and, for the first phase, Visual Impact Muscle Building.

How Does Visual Impact Muscle Building Promote Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy?

During your first phase of training on the VI program you are aiming for cumulative fatigue; you do medium to high reps with a short rest. The sets that Rusty has laid out are pretty specific and change for each exercise, leading toward total muscle exhaustion once you have finished (as opposed to using only one exercise per muscle group, where you'll only be fatiguing a set of muscle fibres within that muscle, with VI you use multiple exercises to work as many different fibres within your muscles as possible). And after my first few sessions, I can testify that they are pretty exhausted, and I am pretty sore from doing them (which I quite like! Although soreness is not the goal, continued progression is the goal).

The Routine

One thing I really like about VI is that Rusty has given direction about how to personalise your program. This is unusual, and brave, as many authors don't trust their trainees enough to give them the freedom to create their own specialised routines. But Rusty knows that the secret to long term success and growth, and by extension, developing a great body, is to show you how to set up your routine to suit you and your specific needs. As he says in the training manual, 'Give a man a fish, and he can eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he can feed himself for life'. And I wholeheartedly agree with this reasoning, it's something that I encourage in all my clients, and aim to promote in everyone that trains. You can think of it as developing yourself at being an expert on you. What you need to do is learn enough to be competent. Probably the biggest thing that has separated successful clients from ones that struggle is their attention to learning the skills and knowledge needed to produce success. Those trainees that leave their success in the hands of others are just not as successful as those who take responsibility for their results and get fully involved in the learning process. It doesn't make for easy reading for many people, as too many are sold on the idea of 'the expert knowing best', or always being on the lookout for the 'magic bullet'. But if you want to guarantee your results you almost certainly need to take control of your situation and commit yourself to learning.

But What's The Routine?

The basic routine is different from what you're given, but that's ok, as Rusty points out, the goal is to tailor it to your needs. So, as I mentioned above, I've altered the routine to suit my needs. What needs are those?

Primarily they are; leave the legs alone and get my chest bigger!

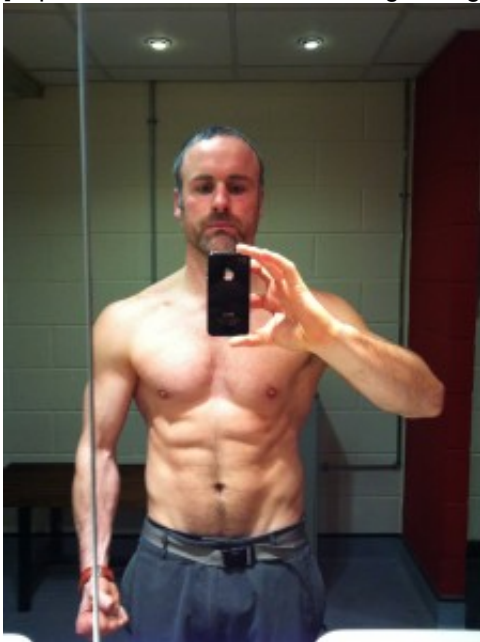
Why No Legs?

I once posted an image of a weight lifter with enormous thighs, and that's exactly what would happen with my legs, if I were to train them consistently. So I have chosen to avoid them for this routine, they are big enough and if I was to train them, I'd end up losing symmetry and probably struggle to fit in trousers even more than I do already (I've had to get trousers that are bigger than my waist for years, just so that I can get my thighs into them).

In addition to not building excessively bulky legs, the secondary benefit of taking all leg work out of my program is that I can spend more time and energy on the areas that I DO want to develop. Which areas are those?

Well, actually it's only really one area: Chest.

[caption id="attachment_805" align="alignright" width="224" caption="Minimal Chest Development"]



[/caption]

As you can see in any pic of me, my chest lags behind every other area. So it's time to focus on it. This means that, for my program, my chest gets four exercises per session. Compare that to three for back, and two for shoulders, abs, biceps and triceps. And I can testify that my chest indeed has noticed the difference in what's being asked of it; it's achieved a level of soreness not reached for quite some time!

So each week I'll be doing a split routine that gets me two workouts for each upper body part each week. This fits in with my diary, allowing me to rest on the weekends (when I normally go biking, so it's not really full resting, but resting from gym based weight training), and also gives me a day off during the week. Which I rather suspect I'll need...

So here I am, at the end of my first week of doing Visual Impact Muscle Building, how do I feel?

Quite a number of things; tiredness, soreness, happiness, satisfaction. I'll explain each one.

Tirednes

When you go from not working out to working out 4 times per week, and you add in the shock to your body of doing a completely new routine, you are asking a lot of your body. So tiredness is to be expected. It is also totally fine, I mean who would do some training and not expect to get tired? I like being tired from training, it's a satisfied

tiredness, not a weary, pulled down, depressed tiredness.

Soreness.

Take this scenario; you've taken a couple of weeks off from your training and then started a new routine, do you think you will be sore? Of course!

And if you then add in the fact of doing a completely different style of routine than previously, you can add a good bit more soreness to your body. I went from a whole body routine, to doing a split routine, and went from low reps, to high reps, I also went from low (ish) volume to high volume, and from large rest periods to short rest periods. Do you think that might cause a state of shock in my body?

I rather suspect you would.

Happiness and Satisfaction

I like training, anyone following my writing for a while will know this, so to be back training after a short rest period is always nice. I was also very ready for a change from the high intensity and long rest periods in myo reps. The change brought about by using Visual Impact for Men seems to be just about right for me. I like that I am working my muscles in a completely different way, and because of this change I also feel my mind is being worked in a different way. I have a new set of challenges, and I'm happy to rise to those challenges.

A while ago a trainer friend of mine saw me doing some bicep work and stood aghast. Why was he aghast?

Because, up till very recently, I have never worked arms. I have also hardly ever done above 10 reps!

I spent the first 10 or more years of my training life getting stronger. So apart from the odd 20 rep squat sessions, I have always gone for low reps with long rests. So one thing is apparent to me: my abilities at producing the type of high volume-high intensity work demanded by Visual Impact Phase 1 are a big shock to me. The implication in this is that it will force my body to adapt in ways it's not really had to before now. It would not be too much of a leap of intuition to suggest that I will almost certainly put on some new muscle mass with this program. And I like the thought of that.

Another thing I like the thought of is how I am going to transfer those muscle mass gains over to Phase 2, but I guess both you and I will just have to wait for that....

Questions Yet To Answer:

Is Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy under reported in the scientific press in the way it's produced? If it is, that would lend some bias toward the 'tension, plus frequency of application' being the current methods of choice for those who let science and studies lead their decisions. I have wondered for a while about this; if those two principles are the main ones involved in muscle growth, why do pro bb'ers still persist with high volume split routines? I appreciate that when you juice, the hormonal landscape changes massively and serious volume and intensity become more possible. But optimal is optimal, regardless of how you change your biology, and more of them would be building bigger muscles with whole body routines. perhaps. One thing that occurred to me whilst watching Ronnie Coleman train once was how much of his body he ends up using whilst training a split routine. What I mean by this is that when he do db rows, for example, he uses his legs and lower back and abs to pull the weight around, in other words his form is appalling. But it does mean he's using much more muscle mass across the body, somewhat blurring the line when it comes to describing what he's doing as a 'split routine'.

Update (2 weeks before end of Phase 1, 6 weeks done)

I have just taken some pics to see how things are progressing and you can judge for yourself:

Before

After