

When you're bodybuilding, you have to keep things simple. Building muscle efficiently largely comes down to what works for you as an individual, but most would agree that splitting your work-outs into groupings is better for build-ing cosmetic muscle than training in a total-body method.

With that said, if you look a bit deeper into the "functionality" debate, many good coaches in the industry will stress the importance of training the movement, not the muscle. That means keeping the focus on primal movement patterns that we must do every day for proper joint health and mobility. This, too, is of prime importance, and should not be overlooked.

Combining the best of both worlds would result in simply employing workouts that involve splitting your days into pushes and pulls. There are several benefits to applying this method – the first of which would be time efficiency. You'll be spending less time in the gym each trip, so your nervous system likely won't be as fried, and you'll get more out of a shorter, intense workout geared toward one key group of muscles.

Speaking of intense workouts, focusing on one set of muscles (let's say the pulling muscles) means more time spent under tension for that group, resulting in a higher-volume workout for the muscles in question. That results in more microtrauma (tissue breakdown) and an increase in sarcoplasmic hypertrophy (a better "pump"). Both of these factors are the most important keys to successfully adding size, where weight training is concerned.

Finally, all muscles involved in pulling exercises are synergistic — they work together. The same goes for all muscles involved with pushing exercises. It makes the most sense not to "mix and match," since there won't be an even amount of stimulation that goes to the opposing muscles. For example, it's more beneficial to train the chest and triceps (as part of a push day) since they work together. Training the chest and biceps on the same day may leave the triceps undertrained and not completely broken down as a result of the actual workout. On the other hand, when it's the triceps' turn to get hit hard in your workout week, they may not be quite 100 per cent since they did get some stimulation and fatigue from the workout prior. Long story short, it can make things

somewhat complicated.

If you're having trouble thinking of how you'd break things down into a push and pull game, we've got your back. Program one is your "Push Day," targeting the upper-body muscle groups that extend and (surprise, surprise) push the weight away from you, including the pectorals, anterior and

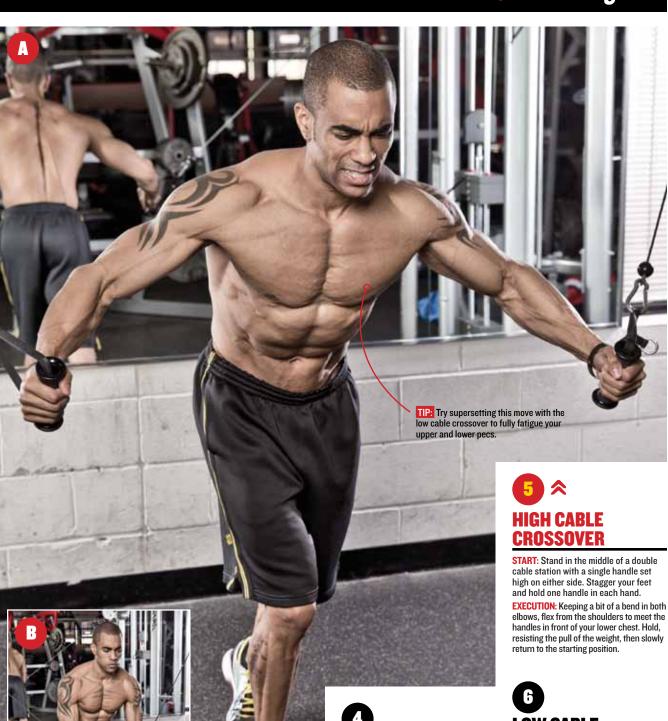
lateral deltoids, and triceps. Program two targets above the waist muscles that pull weight: the biceps, latissimus dorsi and other back muscles, rear deltoids, and the abdominals. Follow each workout as prescribed one to two times per week, taking at least 48 hours of recovery time between by working your lower body on the alternate days.

Exercises	Sets	Reps
DAY 1: PUSH PROGRAM		
Seated Dumbbell Press	3	10-12
Incline Dumbbell Press	3	8-10
Dumbbell Chest Flye	3	10-12
Barbell Skullcrusher	3	10-12
High Cable Crossover	2	12-15
Low Cable Crossover	2	12-15
DAY 2: PULL PROGRAM		
Dumbbell Preacher Curl	3	8-IO (each side)
Alternating Incline Curl	3	10 (each side)
Seated Lateral Raise	3-4	10-12
Rear-Delt Flye	3-4	10-12
Lat Pulldown	3	10-12
Straight-Armed Pulldown	3	10-12
Bench Crunch	4	15-20
Hanging Knee Raise	4	15-20 (each side)



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# DAY ONE / Push Program



### BARBELL **SKULLCRUSHER**

START: Lie on your back on a flat bench, holding a barbell with a shoulder-width grip directly above your chest.

**EXECUTION:** Moving only from the elbows, flex your arms to lower the bar toward your forehead. Pause, then extend your arms until the bar is in the starting position.

TIP: The squeeze at the top is the key to this move; ensure you feel it in the back of your arms as you push the bar away from you.

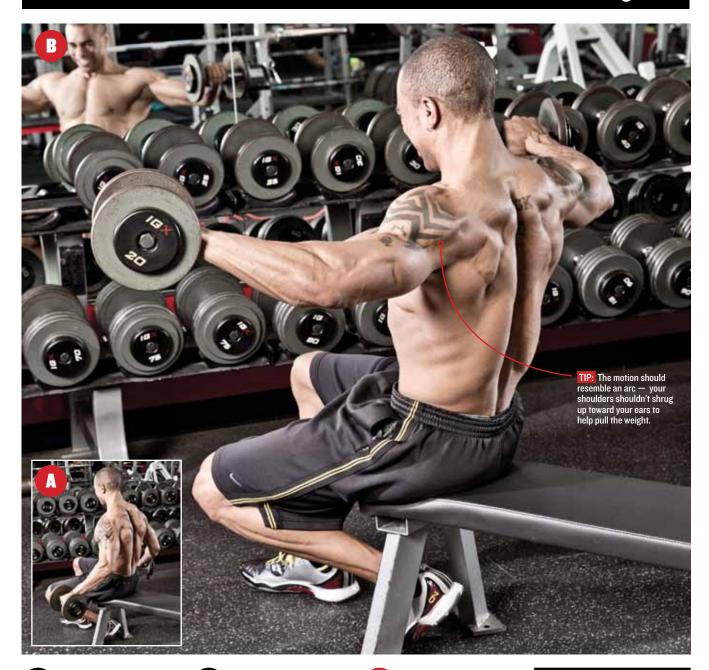
### **LOW CABLE CROSSOVER**

START: Adjust the pulleys on a double cable apparatus so they are in the lowest position. Attach D-shaped handles to either side, grab one end in each hand, and step one foot behind you for stability.

**EXECUTION:** Pull the handles in an arching motion until they are both in front of your upper chest. Move slowly back to the start, fighting against the tension as you move.

TIP: Switch your forward foot in the staggered position with each set to ensure you aren't favouring one side.

### DAY TWO / Pull Program



### DUMBBELL PREACHER CURL

START: Position yourself at the preacher curl bench with your armpit tucked tight to the top of the padding. Hold a dumbbell in your working arm, and extend your hand toward the floor.

EXECUTION: Keep contact between your upper arm and the bench as you flex from the elbow to draw your hand toward your shoulder. Stop just short of full flexion, then slowly lower.

TIP: This move is great for defining the peak of your arm — just keep in mind that you may need less weight than with a regular curl.

# ALTERNATING INCLINE CURL

START: From a face-up position on an incline bench, hold a dumbbell in each hand and straighten your arms toward the floor.

EXECUTION: Flex your right arm to curl the weight. Resist the weight as you extend, focusing on keeping your lower back arch-free. Repeat with your left hand, and alternate throughout your set.

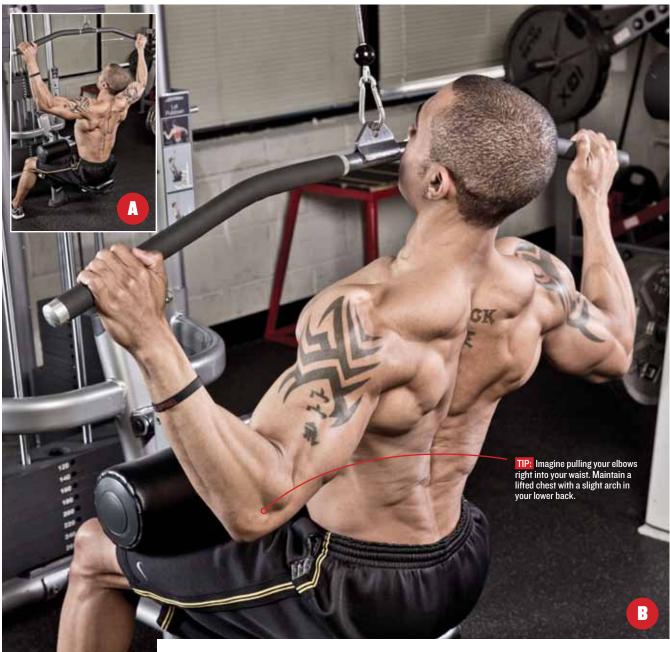
TIP: Fully straighten your arm at the bot-

TIP: Fully straighten your arm at the bottom, and try to not swing your upper arm throughout each rep.

# 3 ≈ SEATED LATERAL RAISE

START: Sit on a bench and hold a dumbbell in each hand. Keep your arms at your sides, extended toward the floor. EXECUTION: Simultaneously raise both weights up and out to the sides until they are aligned with your shoulders or slightly higher. Hold the position at the top for one second, then release and return slowly to the start. > A study in the Strength and Conditioning Journal found that a pronated (overhand) grip resulted in the greatest activation of the lats. Interestingly, grip width wasn't found to have an effect on muscle emphasis.

## DAY TWO / Pull Program





START: Sit backward on an incline bench (set to approximately 30 degrees) with you toes on the ground and your chest against the back padding. Extend your hands toward the floor with weights grasped firmly in each.

**EXECUTION:** Raise your arms up, maintaining a slight bend in your elbows, until they form a straight line. Hold, then smoothly lower back to where you started.

TIP: Move your hands slightly behind you at the top to further engage your back muscles — but don't move any further than your comfort allows.



START: Sit at the lat-pulldown station and adjust the seat so your legs form 90-degree angles and the padding above your thighs sits flush with your legs. Grab the bar above you with an extremely wide grip.

EXECUTION: Retract your shoulder blades as you pull the bar toward your clavicles; your elbows should be pointing down at the bottom. Extend your arms smoothly to complete your rep.



START: Stand in front of a high-pulley station with a long bar attached. Grab the bar overhead with a shoulder-width grip, step back, and hinge forward from the hips.

**EXECUTION:** Pull the bar in a straight motion until it touches the fronts of your thighs. Pause, then raise your arms in a slow, deliberate motion.

TIP: Watch that you don't slam the weights back onto the stack as you reverse. If this occurs, take another step backward.

## DAY TWO / Pull Program



START: Lie on your back on a bench with your feet planted on its surface. Touch your fingertips lightly behind your head, and tilt your chin toward the ceiling.

EXECUTION: Empty your lungs as you raise your shoulders from the bench until your chin is pointed toward your knees. Contract your abdominals, pause for a two-second count, then reverse to the start, lowering vertebra by vertebra.

**TIP:** Doing this move on a bench can help move your focus back to stability.



### **HANGING KNEE RAISE**

START: Hold a pull-up bar with a wider than shoulder-width overhand grip. Lift your feet a few inches from the ground and hang with extended arms.

EXECUTION: Slowly flex your hips and bend your knees to raise your legs in front of you, moving your knees to the left at the top to help target your obliques. Stop, reverse to the start without touching your feet to the ground, and repeat, alternating sides.

### BRING IN THE ROTTOM HALF

The split we've provided for you here takes into account your upper body and abs, which means that you should, for symmetry and functionality's sake, train your lower body during one or two separate workouts each week. However, if you'd rather tackle all of your major muscle groups in two push and pull workouts, we have some suggestions on how to make your days total-body focused.

### **Add These To Your Pull Days**

Romanian Deadlift 3-4 sets / 10 reps
Standard Deadlift 3 sets / 8-10 reps
Hamstring Curl 3 sets / 12 reps

### **Add These To Your Push Days**

 Squat
 3-4 sets / 10 reps

 Leg Press
 3-4 sets / 10 reps

 Calf Raise
 4 sets / 15 reps

