

Get Big - Vegan Style

www.veganbodybuilding.org

The stereotypical view of a vegan is a skinny, pale, weak, salad eating pencil-neck. It's time to change this.

This leaflet is aimed at every person who aims to pack on some quality vegan muscle via weight lifting. The following information is good for beginners and more experienced lifters alike. Take in what you see fit, discard the rest, add your own experience, make the commitment, and grow!

Please note: many of the described movements on this sheet can be dangerous if done incorrectly. Please study the proper form and where possible ask for assistance. You can also join the [veganbodybuilding](http://www.veganbodybuilding.org) email list and fire away any questions you might have there. Please visit www.veganbodybuilding.org for more info. Also for hints on form go to : Infinity fitness - <http://www.infinityfitness.com/videos/exer.htm> or ExRx - <http://www.exrx.net/Exercise.html>

The big 3 of getting big

The basics of putting on muscle can be divided into three core rules: hard training, big eating and rest.

Train hard

When describing hard training it is best to start from stating what it is NOT. Hard training doesn't mean spending hours on end at the gym, hard training does not mean going to the gym every day, hard training definitely does not mean doing incredible amounts of bicep preacher curls super-setted with cable curls. Leave that type of training to the steroid users.

Hard work for natural trainers means intense and abbreviated training sessions, lifting heavy weights (relative to your strength of course) and basic, compound exercises.

Training routine

You can start going to the gym doing whatever you feel like, but before long that becomes boring, counterproductive or both. Too many people at the gym only train the "mirror muscles", the ones you can see from a mirror: chest and biceps. Remember that two thirds of your muscle mass is in your legs and back.

A few basic rules should be remembered when devising a training program:

1. You grow when you rest, not at the gym. As a rule, have more rest days than lifting days in a week. Read more about this in the rest section.
2. Start your sessions moving from compound to isolation movement. Put exercises like squats, deadlifts, chins, barbell rows, bench presses, dips, barbell shoulder presses and so on before isolation movements like barbell curls, skull crushers, grip training and so on.
3. No matter what you do, keep your training sessions under 60 minutes. This usually means that you have maximum of 20 working sets, usually less. You can either work long or hard. You'll need to make a choice.
4. Your body doesn't want to grow. You need to trick it into growth. The only way you can do this is by progression, so make sure that every week you do more than in the previous session be it a slight weight increase, one extra rep, better range of motion and so on. Progress to progress.

Isolation vs. compound movements

Natural trainers prefer compound, (that is, multi-joint) movements to isolation (single joint) exercises. When doing a compound exercise you involve many muscles at the same time, for instance when doing squats you involve, not only quads, but also hams, gluteus, hips, calves and lower back. The leg extension machine is designed to deliver an isolation exercise, which only involves quadriceps. Another example would be the bench press, which involves for instance pecs, triceps, front delts, and upper back. Isolation movement cable crossovers in turn would only recruit pectoral muscles.

Why worry? Natural trainers only have so much recovery ability and wasting it doing isolation exercises would mean expending valuable resources with much less gain. Isolation exercises are a luxury which natural trainers cannot afford. This is not to say that there shouldn't be some isolation exercises in your training program, but that it should be based on heavy compounds.

5. As a warm up, do the exercise you are going to do with light weights, progress to heavier weights until you get to your working weight.

Sample programs

Back to basics -routine

This routine involves no machines, no fancy equipment; no shiny new scientific gadget designed to take all the effort out of the exercise. It's just plain hard work with compound movements. Never do this two days in a row,

DAY 1: PULL

Deadlifts
Pullups/chins
Barbell Rows

DAY 2: PUSH

Incline or Flat Dumbbell Bench Press
Dips
Standing shoulder presses with dumbbells or barbell

DAY 3: LEGS

Squat
Stiff Leg Deadlifts
Weighted Crunches or Weighted Hanging Leg Raises (around 12 reps)



Pick a rep range, 3 sets of 8 reps if you are a beginner, 5 sets of 5 reps if you are more experienced. Pick a weight, which you can manage for 3x8 (or 5x5) and on the following week add a bit more weight (the minimum increment you can find at your gym). If you fail to get all the reps, keep on that weight until you nail it.

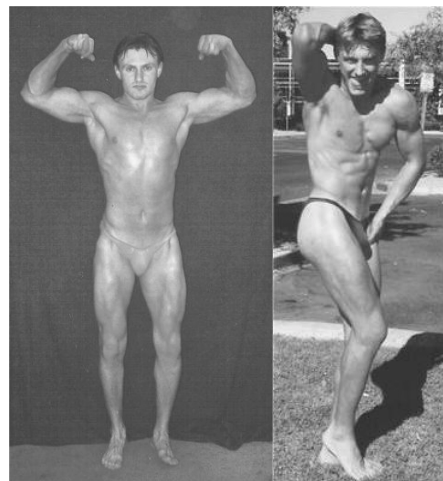
What? No bicep curls? True, no need for them as they get plenty of attention on the pulling day. If you feel that this is not the case, why not add a set or two of them in.

Whole body workouts

Doing your whole body in one session can be a great way to jump start growth. Train maybe every 4th day - always listen to your body and never train until you have fully recovered from your previous session. Have two whole body routines and alternate between them, for example:

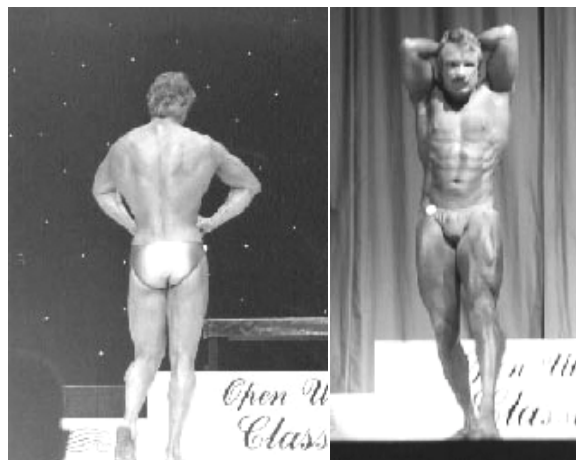
Day A:

Squat
Stiff-legged deadlifts
Wide chin
Dips
Barbell row
Close grip bench
Shrug
Dumbbell Curls
Calf Raise
Crunches



Day B:

Deadlifts
Leg Press
Lat pulldown
Dumbbell incline press
Dumbbell row
Dumbbell shoulder press
Hammer curl
Dips (elbows in)
Calf raises
Leg raises



Do one, yes, just one working set to absolute failure on every movement. That is, do one set so far that you cannot do any more reps if your life depended on it. Aim somewhere between 8-12 reps, if you get 12 reps, up the weight in the next session. Be sure to be well warmed up before doing your working set and to be on the safe side, so one warm up set for each pulling, pushing and leg movement.

Another 3 day split

Back and Biceps

Chins/pullups or lat pulldowns
Dumbbell or barbell row, or some other rowing movement
Bicep curl, like barbell curl or alternating dumbbell curls
Abdominal exercises

Chest and triceps

Bench press
Incline dumbbell flies or incline dumbbell presses
Skull crushers or some other tricep extension movement



Legs and shoulders

Squats or leg press
Stiff-legged deadlift or leg curl
Dumbbell or barbell press, standing
Shrugs
Calf raises

Do 3 sets of 8-10 reps for each. You have plenty of good exercises to choose from depending on your gym and what you like doing.

Eat big to get big

Now you have a training routine and are pounding away at the gym. You are providing your body with enough stimuli to grow. By lifting heavy and progressing you are signaling to your body that growth and strength increases are needed, so you will survive the next training session.

Peanut butter protein bars

1 cup Natural peanut butter
8 tablespoons of syrup
1&1/4 cups soy protein powder
1 cup of uncooked oatmeal

Also try things like couple tablespoons of tahini for variation

Mix the peanut butter and syrup in a bowl, microwave on full for 80 secs.
Add the rest and mix together. The end result should not be too dry, add syrup and/or water for better texture.

You can add raisins/nuts etc to taste as well.

Smooth into a tray and leave for 20 minutes. Cut into 10 to 12 equal bars and store in the fridge.

For your body to comply, it needs to be fuelled. The first rule is to provide more calories than your body needs for normal maintenance. You need to maintain this calorie intake to build muscle.

Does this mean more chips then? Unfortunately no, as a rule of thumb, keep your eating clean and good like soya products, tofu, tempeh, beans, lentils, different nuts and seeds, peanut butter, tahini and so on.. Good whole foods with plenty of protein. Many bodybuilders recommend mad amounts of protein, up to 2 grams per bodyweight in pounds per day. That is probably excessive, but anyway, keep your protein intake high.

Big eating does not necessarily mean big portions as much as small portions through the day, aim to eat every 2 hours or so, never get a chance to get hungry.

Good supplement tips

Supplement companies try to position themselves between you and muscle gains. If you keep your eating good and big, there is very little need for supplementation.

Try some extra protein in the form of soya protein isolate powder (for instance from Holland & Barretts) and see if you notice the difference. Numerous vegan lifters do report good gains when they started taking extra protein in this way. Mix a scoop of protein powder with fruits or fruit juice, water or soya milk and other goodies for a nice high protein smoothie. Or just mix it with water in a hand shaker, shake a bit and neck it.

Rest to grow

Contrary to popular belief, muscles grow outside, not inside, the gym. Get plenty of sleep, have enough "rest days" and keep your sessions short.

Always listen to your body, see any signs of overtraining like diminishing strength, and act by having an extra day off. Fixed routines (i.e. Mondays I do this, Wednesdays I do that) can be bad if you do not allow any flexibility. Hit the gym when you feel ready and take a day off when you don't.

Post-workout shake

Scoop of soya protein isolate
Glucose
Maybe some creatine if you use it
Water

Vegan Power Chocolate Shake

Makes 1 serving

2 scoops soya protein
350 ml ice-cold calcium enriched
chocolate soya milk (Provamel or Alpro)
½- 1 tsp spirulina
A few frozen berries or 1 frozen or fresh
banana

Blend all ingredients in a blender until
smooth

The ideal time for shakes is after a
workout when your body desperately
needs nutrients, protein for muscle
building and glucose for quick carb
absorption.



"Ohhh, my muscles are sore..."

DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscles Soreness) is a familiar feeling for a lifter.

This refers to muscle soreness which doesn't hit you immediately, but only afterwards, sometimes even couple days after the workout.

Never equate DOMS with progress, after you have been lifting for a while you may not get DOMS at all, but still keep making good progress. Your muscles have got used to the constant stress and don't react in the way of muscle soreness anymore.