

***This is an excerpt from an article that appeared on the website, [www.BodyBuilding.com](http://www.BodyBuilding.com)***

***"I thought this piece summarized Mike's philosophy. I had the pleasure of meeting Mike at the Bodybuilding event in Boston's Hynes Auditorium in 1980. We talked to me a few minutes on bodybuilding, Ayn Rand, and being an independent thinker. He was a true pioneer."***

*--Michael Sylvester*

### **Question from a [www.BodyBuilding.com](http://www.BodyBuilding.com) Reader**

*I have read many articles of yours and you always advise bodybuilders that they should train with high intensity, once every 5 - 7 days, and every training session should not last more than 20 minutes in order to achieve maximum muscle stimulation. My question to you is, if 20 years ago you had the knowledge that you have today, would you train with the same frequency and duration for a bodybuilding competition or might you change something?*

### **Mike Mentzer's response...**

Given the knowledge I have today, I certainly wouldn't train in the same fashion I did 20 years ago. In fact, I wrote in my book "Heavy Duty I, "Despite having been the arch-advocate of lesser training [20 years ago] I, too, was still overtraining." What I have learned over the last 11 years, since taking up personal training, is that weight resistance is much, much more stressful than the average bodybuilder might fathom.

Lifting weights places stresses on the body that might be best illustrated by the following. Imagine a flat, horizontal line drawn on a piece of paper from left to right, with the flat line representing zero effort. Now imagine a squiggly sine wave come off the zero effort flat line, the sine wave representing efforts of various sorts. You get out of bed each morning, shower, brush your teeth, walk to your car, drive to work and so forth.

These are small efforts causing the sine wave to barely move above the flat line.

Then, all of a sudden, you come to that point in the day where you do a heavy set of Squats to failure. All of a sudden the sine wave departs straight up off the paper and across the street! The distance from the flat line to the apex of that spike represents not only the greater intensity with the Squats but, also, the much greater inroad into recovery ability than our usual, daily little efforts.

I wrote in my book "Heavy Duty II: Mind and Body" that the idea is not "more is better" or "less is better" but "precise is best"; and as I learned from training close to 2,000 people plus myself that the precise amount of exercise required to induce optimal growth stimulation isn't nearly as much as you've been led to believe or would like to believe.

Remember, the idea is not to go into the gym to discover how many sets you can do or how long you can mindlessly endure. Instead, the idea is to go into the gym as an informed, rational individual and do only the precise amount of exercise required to stimulate growth and no more; then get the hell out of the gym, go home and **GROW!** A bodybuilding workout, by God, is not an endurance contest!

Last year I was in 80 percent of my shape, and my leg workouts lasted six minutes and upper body workouts 15 minutes, training once every four to seven days.

This next excerpt is from his book, "HEAVY DUTY 2: MIND AND BODY",

## CHAPTER 6: SERVING THE NEEDS OF THE GROWTH MECHANISM

In early 1995 I received a phone call from a young man in New Jersey who was obsessed with the idea that his lack of bodybuilding progress was due to a nutritional problem. As soon as he got me on the phone, without even announcing his name, he launched into what seemed like an endless series of questions about different supplements such as phosphogain, vanadyl sulfate, Hot Stuff and MetRx. In the midst of this catechism, it occurred to me that since he was so confused about the subject of nutrition, it wasn't likely that he understood anything about the science of high-intensity, anaerobic exercise either. Initially, he disavowed this, exclaiming his lack of bodybuilding progress was due solely to faulty nutrition. (In fact, this is rarely the case, especially in this country, where most people are not just well-nourished, but overnourished--especially bodybuilders.)

Upon further questioning, I found I was right. He was violating all of the laws of nature here. He knew nothing about the principle of intensity, or the necessity of training to failure; therefore, he wasn't stimulating much if anything in the way of meaningful growth. And even if he had been, he was so overtrained from his two-hour workouts five to six days a week that his body couldn't have produced any worthwhile results whatever his diet.

I said to him, "Young fella, you remind me of the man who earnestly desires a suntan, but continues to make the mistake of going outside at midnight, then wastes thousands of dollars on different suntan lotions, thinking the next one will solve his problem.

"The issue of the suntan lotion is not without some import," I continued "however, it only assumes relevance within the context of first having satisfied nature's fundamental requirement, which is the presence of a high-intensity sunlight stress. In other words, you can't obtain a suntan sitting in front of a 100-watt light bulb for an infinity of eternities, even if you're rubbing phosphogain suntan lotion over your entire body all the while. Nature sets the terms."

The relationship of nutrition to bodybuilding is similar. While nutrition is, of course, important in the daily life of everyone, in the context of bodybuilding, nutrition is a consideration secondary to a proper high-intensity training program. One must stimulate growth first, via the imposition of an anaerobic training stress, and then adequate nutrition must be provided during a sufficient rest period between workouts so that the growth mechanism may produce any growth stimulated by the training.