

FST-7: Preloaded and Reloaded!

Contributed by Hany Rambod
Thursday, 22 October 2009

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The Pro Creator

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What you saw was one of two variations my clients have been using as specialization routines for stubborn body parts. I call these the "FST-7 Preloaded" and "FST-7 Reloaded" concepts. What you witnessed was the FST-7 Preloaded version, which has a bit of the pre-exhaust element to it. In the case of the workout you watched, the athlete would begin with 7 sets of leg extensions for roughly 10-12 reps each, with only 30-45 seconds rest in between each set.

What this does is "prime the pump" for the heavier sets to follow. The next two exercises are front squats and leg presses, each done in a high-intensity style. After sufficient warm-ups, 2 work sets of 8-12 reps, as heavy as possible, are performed. Normally, the quads would not receive any significant pump from sets such as these. Many bodybuilders would feel the more

powerful glutes and hip flexor muscles working instead. But the initial 7 sets on leg extensions served to pump up the quadriceps and pre-stretch the fascia, so that the heavy sets of front squats and leg presses would deliver a far more significant pump than usual. Then, to really make sure that the quads are hammered into new growth, we finish with a final set of 7s on hack squats. This technique is fairly new, but so far the results are very encouraging. Another advanced version is the FST-7 Reloaded concept.

In this variation, two heavy exercises are performed for straight sets, and the workout ends with two series of 7s done back-to-back. In the example of quads, an athlete may start with two or three exercises such as leg extensions, squats, and perhaps walking lunges; then finish with leg presses and hack squats for their 7s. Both of the methods discussed above would be ideal for a person who needs to improve the fullness and sweep of his or her quadriceps, yet is unable to squat heavy due to preexisting problems with the lower back or knees. Another common muscle group the Reloaded version is used on is the upper chest. I might have a client do heavy sets with incline dumbbell presses, incline dumbbell flyes, and the flat Hammer Strength bench press machine and finish with both the pec deck and cable flyes done for 7 sets each. Again, I must emphasize that these are advanced techniques and both make a deep impact on the body's ability to recover. You must not attempt to use them for every single body part at the same time or I guarantee you that you'll overtrain. I also want to add that even when used sparingly as I suggest, special attention must be paid to optimizing recovery with proper rest, nutrition, and supplementation. If you fail to respect your body's recovery needs, this or any other type of training system will not deliver the results you want.

You and several other nutritionists have recommended eating tilapia fish as a low-fat, low-calorie source of protein when dieting to lose fat. In the November issue of MD, I read that tilapia is high in concentrations of arachidonic acid, which a recent study said caused inflammation linked to heart disease, blood vessel damage and cell aging. I have a few pounds of tilapia in my freezer right now. Should I toss it in the garbage?

I wouldn't be so hasty if I were you. Realize that this is simply one study, and the odds are that another study could come along soon saying something completely different. Another aspect of this study that makes me a little skeptical is that there is no indication as to what amounts of arachidonic acid might be considered dangerous. It might turn out that you would need to eat several pounds of tilapia every day for months to be at any risk. Arachidonic acid is the main ingredient of at least two top-selling supplements I know of, and the inflammation described is actually the catalyst for muscle growth that bodybuilders see when using them. Keep in mind that many studies have also linked the consumption of beef to a wide assortment of health problems such as heart disease and several types of cancer. Yet beef continues to be a valuable part of many bodybuilders' diets, particularly in the off-season when muscle growth is the goal. It's likely that many of the negative consequences of eating beef can be counteracted by a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise and a diet high in fiber and antioxidants. As I have said here many times, I don't believe in absolutes such as "you should never eat beef," or "you should never eat tilapia." Anything taken to extremes can be dangerous. That being said, I doubt that eating tilapia a few times a week is going to put a hard-training bodybuilder who eats a healthy diet in serious jeopardy. Keep watching the studies. If anything conclusive proving that tilapia was indeed so harmful, chances are good that it would be banned for

sale by the FDA, or at the very least would have to carry some type of warning for consumers.

I'm following a very low-carb diet and wanted to know if I could still benefit from the FST-7 training system. Would it work for me, or would it be a waste of time?

This really all depends on your supplementation. If you are using products that help you stay full and allow you to continue getting good pumps even on a diet very low in carbohydrates, then FST-7 would definitely produce results for you. Examples of such types of supplements include specific amino acids, nitric oxide-based products, and more advanced derivatives of creatine. These tend to be pricier than the old generic monohydrate, but it's one of those cases where you get what you pay for. I plan to discuss how to integrate your supplementation program with FST-7 both in terms of maximizing the pump and recovery in a column very soon. Getting back to your original question now. If you can't get a pump due to dietary and/or supplementation issues, you won't stretch the muscle fascia and therefore won't reap the benefits in terms of muscle growth that you would otherwise. However, you'll still see good calorie-burning benefits from the fast pace that the sets of seven with minimal rest provide.

What's going on with your website? I tried to check it out in mid-September but all I saw was one of those "coming soon" type pages. What's going on? When will your site be up and what will be on it?

As I mentioned last month, I have actually had the domain rights to my site for quite some time and had planned on launching it well over a year ago. But as much as I wanted to proceed, I was simply too busy consulting for supplement companies and wrapped up in other projects. I'm happy to report that by the time you read this, the sites www.fst-7.com and www.hanyrambod.com, which are one and the same, will be live. There will be several major features on the site. First, you'll be able to inquire about my services for contest prep, off-season training and seminars. There will also be a section showing my most notable clients of the present and past. There will also be archives with dozens of my past articles and columns. Possibly the most exciting part of my site will be the forums. By simply registering and creating a free user account, you'll be part of an online community to share ideas and information about FST-7 and other types of training programs. Users will be able to post their own blogs and create their own profiles and photo galleries. Other forums may focus on gossip, but the forums on www.fst-7.com aren't going to be about making fun of people or speculating about who's dating whom. Instead, it's going to be about exchanging ideas and information and sharing experiences and results so we can all learn more. Whether you're a young guy trying to get to 180 pounds for the first time or an older veteran lifter looking for ways to train around injuries, it's all going to be about helping each other out so everybody wins. I'll be posting on the forums, of course, and you never know who else might stop by. And best of all, access to everything on my site is 100 percent free, including the archives.

Hany, I want to start training in the FST-7 style, but I

really don't know how to put a good workout routine together. Can you send me some sample workouts for the standard FST-7 system, plus the hybrid variations?

This is an example of a typical e-mail I get at least once a day. My new site will have all of these. More importantly, members will keep online training logs and offer feedback and opinions on all the techniques they try. That's important because "real-world" applications are often more useful to serve as examples. You may see someone with the same goals as you who has tried several different variations and has rated the effectiveness of each. This could save you some trial and error on your own, even though we are all individuals. Basically, the advantage will be that you'll have access to a large amount of different FST-7 programs that many individuals with varying needs and goals will post. This will ensure that you'll always have a resource should you ever need ideas or inspiration. And of course, we invite you to participate so that others can also learn and get ideas from you and your experiences as well.

Got a question for Hany you would like to see answered here? E-mail him at HanyRambod@aol.com. Due to the high volume of e-mail he receives and limited editorial space, only selected questions will be answered and used.