

Water retention, power lifting and hippy chicks

The summer is the time that we all like to show off just how much hard work we have done in the gym and just how good our diet has been since we last had a bit of sunshine. Or maybe it shouldn't be, because for me the summer is the time when I realise just how many people get things so very wrong with their training and diets throughout the nine months or so that the weather in our lovely country makes it a necessity to cover our bodies with multiple layers.

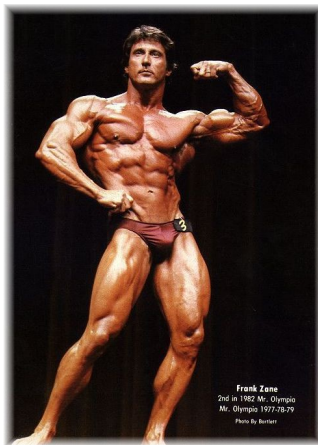
I coach men all year round and see them through their bulking stages and their competition preparation stages and of course I am often back stage helping guys to get ready to go on stage when they are at their peaks. These guys do get it right; they know that there is a time to be fat (I myself can blow up to about 19 stone off season in an effort to get some more muscle growth) and a time to be dieted. Most competitive body builders will be about 15% over their competition weight off season, some will be much more than that, few will be less. These guys are not a problem; they know how to diet and how to train, however most people don't and in most cases the wrong diet and training can really make the body out of shape, especially women.

I spend a lot of the summer months looking at women, then again what healthy red blooded male doesn't? In most cases I can tell where they are going wrong without even speaking to them. Apart from the obvious one, that the majority of women have too much sugar, I'll list the usual problems and then you will understand the title of this piece.

Firstly water. Almost everyone that I ever write a diet for does not drink enough clean fresh mineral water. As a general rule, I always say drink an absolute minimum of one litre of water for every 40lbs of body weight daily. That means ladies that if you weigh a miniscule 120lbs (8stone 6lbs) you still need a minimum of 3 litres a day. I personally drink at least 6 litres a day and yes it does mean that I have to pee about 12 times every 24 hours. Really I should drink more and I do try to force down an extra litre wherever I can; again yes, I struggle with some of the stuff that you have to do too! Why so much water? Well I'm not going to get all technical on you here; in very simple terms you need water to feed the muscles as water is the main constituent of any muscle and indeed the entire human body. Also, the more water you drink the less your body will retain. Think of it like this, if the brain thinks its only going to get one litre of water a day it will hold on to all that it can. If it knows it is going to have water continually forced into the body it wont bother holding on to any as it knows there is lots more on the way at any minute.

Secondly compound lifting. Now we all know that the best way to get bigger all over is to squat, bench and deadlift. These three exercises are necessities when anyone wants to grow. They will give you a big barrel chest, a strong back and big powerful legs.....oh and a fat arse and gut, but that's the bit that you only find out the hard way. Why does this happen? Well again I'll keep it simple. When you do these exercises, as they are heavy compound movements they put a huge strain on the joints and because of this the brain instructs the body to fill the areas under pressure with fat

and water purely for protection. With the benching it's not really a problem, it makes the shoulders look bigger and enhances the barrel look. However with heavy squatting and deadlifting the hips are constantly rotated whilst under huge pressure and this is an abnormal feeling for them so the brain again loads in as much protection as possible. The other area is the glutes. Look, if you squat heavy you are putting a great deal of strain on the glutes so the brain will send in the protection again. Don't believe me? Next time you watch the world's strongest man on TV have a look. These guys are enormous and immensely powerful but would you want to look like that? Some do and I respect that, but I do what I do to get the physique of men that make the male body a thing of beauty. Have a look at these pictures, Frank Zane, when he first won the Mr. Olympia weighed 8 STONE less than the current Mr. Olympia, Jay Cutler. Now Jay is an incredibly huge guy and a lot of bodybuilders aspire to look like that but to do that you have to spend most of the year massively overweight, powerlifters are permanently overweight. Now have a look and tell me who has the most aesthetically pleasing physique.



Lastly hippy chicks. When I was young this phrase was applied to girls that wore flowers in their hair, nowadays it is applied to girls with what I call alcopop hips and arses. These are the girls who have poor diets, drink lots of sugar filled alcopops and don't workout. However the term can also be applied to some girls who do workout and carry a lot of fat around the hips and on their bum. Personally I would never instruct a woman to squat or deadlift unless they want to be extremely bottom half heavy or unless they were a bodybuilder. Some girls do like the Jo Lo big booty look and some guys do to, each to their own. The purpose of this is not to say what is best, the world would be a boring place if every woman looked the same so it's good that different people have different opinions on what looks nice, but at least now you know the causes and cures so you can decide exactly what you want that area of your body to look like and train accordingly.