



Dr. John Rusin & Kalli Youngstrom

MORE MUSCLE, LESS FAT



Proven Training and Nutrition Techniques for
Hypertrophy and Fat Loss

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John Rusin and Kalli Youngstrom

Preface

Most of us spend a significant portion of our waking hours, of our very lives, in a gym or in training of some kind. We spare no expense in the pursuit of our training goals. We dedicate our time, energy, money, and comfort to progressing our bodies toward their genetic limits. Still, how many people do you know who are truly satisfied with their return on investment? Are you?

Think of this e-book and the accompanying training program as a bridge between where you are and where you want to be, as the beginning of an answer to the riddle you haven't been able to solve, and as a promise of the return on investment that you've been waiting for.

Make no mistake, though. Even the best training and nutrition guidance has no value if you don't put in the effort. I don't mean a little effort, or even a lot, but ALL the effort. Unless you are ready to commit to that level of focus, this program is not for you.

If you're still with us, congratulations! You are about to begin to enjoy your training journey, and your results, like never before. It is with great pleasure and pride that we present the More Muscle, Less Fat Training and Nutrition Program.

Your Friends in Success,
The Breaking Muscle Staff

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Section 1: Nutrition

Chapter 1

A Step-by-Step Approach to Successful Fat Loss

Kalli Youngstrom

Like everything in life, when it comes to dieting, sometimes less is more, and being efficient when making diet adjustments stands to benefit any athlete or competitor. The fewer changes an athlete must make in order to coax progress from the body, the better.

Ideally, we make the smallest changes to get the most results, whether those results show on the weight scale, in body measurements, or as body fat percentages. Whether your goal is general aesthetics, functional performance, or bodybuilding, the same theory applies, and trying to go from zero to sixty too quickly is sure to end in failure for any sort of athlete.

In approaching a weight-loss plan, there are a number of variables that can be manipulated in order to accelerate fat loss, including food sources and food quality, meal timing, overall caloric intake, and macronutrient breakdown. Let's take a look at each.

Why Fat-Loss Diets Fail

Now, I don't mean "fail" in the sense of giving up and throwing in the towel because your diet is hard. I mean fail in the sense that your body is no longer responding in the expected way when you're in a calorie deficit and you should be losing weight based on the fact you're outputting more calories than you're inputting. When trying to achieve extremely low body fat levels, plateaus often happen because you (or your coach) try to implement too much restriction too soon, and eventually there's nowhere left to go in terms of cutting calories, reducing carbs, and so on.¹

If three months prior to a competition, you've already reduced your calorie intake to lower than your basal metabolic rate, eliminated all carbs, and limited food sources to lean proteins, natural fats, and veggies, then it's likely your metabolism will begin to compensate by slowing down and halting fat loss. In a properly planned diet, this isn't a problem as there are always variables left to adjust in order to reignite progress. But when calories, food sources, and macronutrients are already severely restricted, there's often nowhere left to go - but up.

By planning a strategic and progressive diet and making moderate and step-by-step changes from beginning to end, you can achieve continued fat loss and overcome plateaus.

First Things First, Food Sources

The first variable is obvious: cut the crap. By making the transition to whole, non-processed, natural foods - including lean protein, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats - the body will achieve more stable blood sugar levels, sustained energy, and a better position metabolically. Not to mention, it will benefit from an overall increase in the thermic effect of food.

In implementing a “cutting” diet, the first thing I do is make the transition to an entirely clean diet, swapping out any processed add-ins, quick-digesting meal replacements, and simple carbohydrates. I make sure I’m getting the most bang for my buck not only in terms of volume, but also in terms of nutrient value and fat burning. The change in food sources alone, without any change in calorie intake, can often be enough to spark fat loss during the initial period of the diet. I recommend profiting from this change in food sources as much as possible before making any other changes in diet.²

Next Up, Calories

The next variable that comes into play is caloric intake. By decreasing calories in a step-by-step manner, it’s less likely you will hit a fat-loss plateau early in the diet. When too many calories come out too quickly, the body begins to make adjustments to protect itself. It lowers certain hormones to conserve energy and essentially works to store fat instead of burning fat.

As a general rule of thumb, I know I need around 1,400-1,500 calories when dieting in order to maintain effective workouts. As a figure competitor, the ability to maintain muscle mass is important to me, so I won’t go below that calorie level before making changes to macronutrients. If I have experience a fat-loss plateau at this level of intake, I will move away from the calorie variable and move toward making changes in my macronutrients in order to continue achieving fat loss.

Moving Macronutrients

Once you reach a point where continuing to lower your calories could deplete your energy and hormones, the next step is to make changes to your macronutrient ratios. For most people, this will likely be a transition from carbs to fats as the primary energy source.

For some, this change will progress to a low-carb ketogenic diet in order to continue fat loss. Personally, I have had great success on a ketogenic diet. I use ketosis strategically for specific periods of dieting, but for many people the same results can be achieved with a low-to-moderate carbohydrate intake.³ If the focus of your diet includes maintaining performance for competition, then you may consider lowering fats instead of carbs, while still keeping adequate fat intake to ensure a healthy hormonal profile.

In fiddling with your macronutrients, you may consider implementing the use of strategic cheat meals or refeeds at carefully planned intervals to keep your metabolism charged. When making cuts or changes to fats or carbs within your allotted calories, it's important to take both meal and macronutrient timing into account. Doing so can help you further the body's ability to reach extremely low levels of body fat and give you more variables to tinker with.

Macronutrient and Meal Timing

When subtracting carbs, I recommend first removing them from less energy-intensive times of the day, such as outside of your pre- and post-training meals. By maintaining your carbs pre- and post-workout, you ensure proper fuel and recovery for your body. If, as your diet progresses, you need to remove more carbs, you may then consider removing them from the peri-workout period.

When subtracting fats, I use the same theory and remove fats from points in the day where they are less crucial, i.e. peri-workout where they slow down the digestion of carbs. I make an effort to leave fats in near the end of the day to slow digestion and lower the amount of time spent completely fasted, as the fats will allow your final protein meal to digest more slowly through the night.

By considering the timing of your macronutrients, you take advantage of another variable to alter after switching to whole foods, restricting calories, and adjusting your macronutrient ratios.

What Are You Waiting For?

By recognizing there are numerous variables to adjust throughout your diet and utilizing a less-is-more approach from the start, you are less likely to experience plateaus, as well as metabolic slow down and damage. You are more likely to achieve success in a healthy and balanced way. Although there are numerous methods and approaches to fat-loss dieting, I have found success with this step-by-step approach and recommend to others.

Summary Points

- Cut the crap. Make the transition to whole, non-processed, natural foods.
- Decrease calories in a step-by-step manner.
- Change your macronutrient ratios. For most, this is a transition from carbs to fats.
- Consider the timing of your meals and your specific macronutrients.

Chapter 2

Creative Dieting: Clean Eating Doesn't Have to Be Boring

Kalli Youngstrom

Whether you're getting ready for a bodybuilding competition, cutting to make weight for a certain sport, or just trying to tighten things up, dieting in a calorie deficit can feel restricting. But the good news is it doesn't have to.

Naturally, there's some discomfort that comes with cutting calories, but I've always been one for making the most out of everything you've got, even if all you've got is chicken and asparagus! It's no secret I prefer a clean, whole-foods diet, but I take advantage of low-calorie add-ins and creative options to keep things from getting stagnant.

Whether you abide by the "rules" of clean eating, flexible dieting, or something in between, if you want to make the most of your calories, you can make even the most "diet-y" diet meal something to savor.

Eating for Volume

Volume eating is one of the best tricks when it comes to feeling satisfied on a calorically restricted diet, especially on low-carb days. Don't get me wrong, I love me some nut butter, but the satiety that comes with a full belly is based on volume, not calorie intake. So, replacing the volume of food without replacing the calories is a great way to feel content while maintaining a deficit.⁴

High fiber foods, which are more slowly digested, generally give you the most bang for your calorie buck and tend to be lower in overall calories. This is why I love low-starch, high-fiber vegetables and more complex carbohydrates in my diet. I want to be able to eat the most amount food for my allotted energy intake.

I'll often remove protein powder when dieting to ensure greater volume and satiety. As someone who needs a relatively low calorie intake on a cutting diet, 27g of protein coming from lean meats winds up being more fulfilling than 27g of protein in shake form.

I also change the way I combine certain food sources to stretch my food further. For example, instead of making pancakes with my egg whites and oatmeal, I will cook them separately, eating the oatmeal and egg whites each on their own with lots of non-starchy vegetables added. To me these small changes can make huge differences as the latter keeps my stomach full and satisfied.

In preparing certain foods, I often include more liquid than normal, again to amp up the volume. When I do have protein powder (currently once a day) I blend it with three trays of ice to make a huge bowl of protein ice cream or a giant shake that takes time to eat, can be savored, leaves me feeling full, and is the perfect thing to look forward to at the end of every day.

I use a similar trick when I cook my oatmeal and try to squeeze as much water in as possible so it swells up even more for a big satisfying bowl first thing in the morning. I always recommend keeping a high water intake throughout the day for health and performance reasons, so the satiety and less hunger just happens to be a positive side effect!⁵

My final secret weapon for volume eating is gelatin. Gelatin is a great way to curb a sweet tooth and keep you feeling full with few added calories from protein. Plus, it gives you the added benefit of enhanced joint care. If the artificially sweetened Jell-O (sugar free, of course) isn't for you, try using plain gelatin and flavoring it with stevia sweetened water enhancers.

Preparation Methods

How you prepare your food can not only stretch your calories further, but can also provide the variety needed to keep you sane if you're working with limited food options. People who are miserable on their diet are miserable because not only are they eating the same thing every day, but they're likely eating it in the exact same way.

I eat the same things every day, but it rarely feels like it because I'm creative with the ways I combine and prepare my foods. For example, I eat chicken and rice, twice a day, every day, but it doesn't feel like the same thing as sometimes the chicken is ground, a full breast, on a skewer, in a patty, formed into "muffins," you name it. It sounds simple, but being creative with your preparation and combinations can make the difference needed to enjoy your food.

So, if it's all about being creative, who says egg whites have to be savory, not sweet? One of my favorite ways to eat egg whites is by adding vanilla, cinnamon, and stevia. Definitely not the norm, but it provides another option that mixes up my regular egg whites. Of course, I also have the option of making them hardboiled, scrambled, or into an omelet with some added vegetables. My vegetable sources are where I get a lot of my variety, not only in the types, but also in how I prepare them - everything from raw spiraled noodles, to roasted, to pureed, to keep things fresh and add variety.

Adding Flavor

Condiments, spices, and seasonings are your friends. I always check the label for added sugar or oils first, but I know what low-calorie condiments and seasonings

work for my diet. Although not necessarily “clean” in the strict sense of the word, these additions are a great way to keep me from getting bored and feeling bland on a restricted diet.

Here are some of my favorites:

Mustards and Hot Sauce: Yellow, apple cider vinegar, grainy, spicy, Dijon. Just make sure you check the label for added wine, sugar, and honey as true Dijon mustards have wine added, but many grocery store versions don't. Mustard is the perfect way to add flavor as well as moisture and can be used to marinade, make salad dressings, or if you're lazy like me, just for dipping. It goes on everything! And hot sauce, well, that speaks for itself!

Sugar-Free Ketchup, Salsa, and Tomato Sauce: Although slightly higher in sugar, a little goes a long way and make big flavors. I love sugar-free ketchup (stevia sweetened) on eggs, salsa goes on just about anything, and tomato sauce is a great way to make a big bowl of spiralled or roasted vegetables and ground chicken almost as good as pasta.

Low-Calorie Syrups: If artificial sweeteners aren't for you, neither is this recommendation, but if you're not against their use, then no/low calorie syrups and coffee flavorings are an amazing way to change the flavor of your foods. Sugar-free coffee syrups can be added to oatmeal, egg whites, and coffee itself (obviously) to mix up the flavor, as well as hit your sweet tooth craving. Sugar-free syrups like the ones from Walden Farms are another way to add variety into your meals and make you feel like you're having a treat without the added calories. Walden Farms and similar companies offer lines of artificially sweetened syrups, sauces, and salad dressings and can often be found at supplement and health stores. If your grocery or pharmacy has a diabetic friendly section, they are often there, too.

Spices: Spices are the variety of life - or vice versa. But either way, spice it up! Varying your spices is an easy, low-calorie, affordable way to change your foods. Spices like cayenne and chili powder have the added benefit of increased thermogenesis. Blackened chicken is one of my favorite ways to prepare chicken breast. It's packed with flavor and is far from the sad plain chicken breast most think of when it comes to dieting.

Summary

Whether you're a clean eater or a flexible dieter, I hope these tips can help you stretch your meals further and give you more flexibility in terms of taste and flavor. If you're following a nutrition program or working with a coach, always double-check before bringing in any extras. The closer I get to the stage, the less I add to my foods in terms of condiments and spices. Simple is where I feel safe, but for now I appreciate the variety.

My Top 5 Favorites to Add to My Pre-Contest Diet

- Pickles! - Pickled green beans, banana peppers, jalapeños, cucumbers, you name it.
- Cauliflower - A secret weapon when it comes to volume! Riced or pureed cauliflower can be added to many recipes to stretch them out and keep you full.
- “Honey Mustard” or “Sweet and Sour Sauce” - I use grainy mustard and no-sugar-added pancake syrup to replicate honey mustard. Sugar-free ketchup and no-sugar-added pancake syrup replicates sweet and sour sauce.
- The Grill - Seriously, everything is better on the BBQ.
- Protein Ice Cream - Protein powder, sugar-free almond milk or water, and zero-calorie syrup. Top with nut butter and you’re in heaven.

Oh, and one more...

Cocoa powder - Because it didn’t really fit anywhere else, and chocolate makes everything better.

Chapter 3

How I "Cheat" My Way to Shredded

Kalli Youngstrom

I put quotation marks around "cheat" because is it really a cheat if it is a strategically planned dieting tool? In my opinion, no.

I use the term cheat meal to reflect a high-calorie, high-carbohydrate meal composed of foods not normally found in my day-to-day or pre-contest diet. I also use this phrase to stress that it is a singular meal, not an all-out free-for-all, (don't even get me started on the concept of cheat days).

Six weeks after a competition, I've maintained that lean look.



Cheat meals are a tool I use to ensure I maintain hormonal balance, micronutrient fulfillment, and a healthy metabolism to achieve sustained weight loss while achieving extremely low levels of body fat. After being in a calorie deficit for an extended period, I implement cheat meals to continue losing body fat, avoid plateaus, and maintain general physical, psychological, and metabolic health.⁶

Cheat Meals are Not Refeeds

A cheat meal is defined based on macronutrient type, food type, meal timing, and quantity. A cheat meal differs from a refeed in that it is made up of non "clean" foods, is normally not weighed or measured, is made up of a high percentage of carbohydrates, and takes place after a sustained amount of time in a caloric deficit, normally for a fat-loss diet (pre-contest or competition).

Although a refeed is often implemented to achieve similar results, it is normally used during a less extreme calorie deficit and provides a smaller percentage of calorie/micronutrient increase coming from clean foods already found in the athlete's day-to-day diet. Refeeds are often used to provide higher levels of carbohydrates on taxing training days, as well as to provide hormonal and metabolic boosts through a process of carb cycling. Refeeds are often prescribed in grams.⁸

How a Proper Cheat Meal Works

When implemented correctly, cheat meals are an effective method for achieving dieting success. As an individual begins a period of caloric deficit, the body's hormones naturally begin to down-regulate as the body enters "starvation" mode. This is the body taking precautions to protect itself as it is forced to output more calories than are coming in.

The hormones responsible for this reaction are crucial in controlling an individual's metabolism and are also the hormones responsible for satiety, fat loss, and overall energy. The most directly affected hormones include leptin, thyroid hormones T3 and T4, and ghrelin. These are responsible for many things, including overall energy expenditure, fat storage, mood, metabolic rate, and hunger.



I never let dieting get in the way of having energy for quality workouts.

When the body realizes it's in an extended hypo-caloric state, thyroid and leptin hormones decrease in attempt to conserve energy, while ghrelin increases to stimulate hunger and encourage calorie intake. Although these hormones are

affected by overall calorie levels, they are also directly influenced by individual macronutrients, particularly carbohydrate intake.⁷

By providing the body with spikes in both calories and carbohydrates, you are able to trick the body into forgetting it's in a calorie deficit. This keeps it from entering starvation mode and avoids the negative side effects of sustained caloric deficit. If the body is not provided these calorie/carbohydrate spikes, it will continue to down-regulate the thyroid. This leads to lower metabolic rate, decreased fat burning, and increased hunger and cravings - a state of hypothyroidism.

This one high-calorie, carbohydrate-dense meal is stoking the metabolic fire by driving these hormones back to normal levels, cutting off the metabolic slow-down that has begun, and increasing metabolic rate. As the body has become accustomed to restricted calories (and probably restricted carbohydrates, too), this high-calorie, high-carb meal is unlikely to be stored as fat as the body's energy stores are already extremely depleted.¹

When to Cheat

The timing of cheat meals will vary for every individual in terms of both initial introduction and frequency during the duration of the diet. That said, they are most effective during periods of definite and prolonged caloric restriction.

As your hormones don't immediately experience the negative effects of a calorie deficit, there is a certain grace period between the start of a restricted-calorie diet and the need for an initial cheat meal. The need for cheat meals will be based on an individual's metabolic and hormonal profile, the magnitude of calorie and macronutrient deficit, and the duration of the calorie deficit.

The longer and more restricted the diet and the leaner an individual becomes, the more frequently a cheat meal will be beneficial to recover hormonal levels and ensure sustained fat loss. Although every individual experiences these hormonal changes at different rates, by listening to your body you can assess when a cheat meal is needed (not wanted) to rehabilitate any compromised hormones.²

How to Achieve Cheat Meal Success

The Initial Period: Ensure your body has reached a caloric deficit by assessing a two- to six-week period of sustained fat loss (this can be measured by body fat levels or the scale). After consistent fat loss for at least two weeks (for those with high metabolisms), but more likely a three- to six-week period, you can implement an initial cheat meal to assess your body's hormonal response.



Responsible eating and planned cheats helps keep me close to my physique goals year-round.

What to Eat: This meal is meant to be a shock to the system, so it is necessary for it to be both high calorie and high carb, but without massive amounts of volume. Therefore, to achieve a calorie and carbohydrate dense meal in one sitting, it's often necessary to use more refined carbohydrates that are high in sugar, low in fiber, and outside the dieter's normal foods.

After the Initial Cheat: If the body responds well to a cheat meal, you will notice increased vascularity, little to no excess water (bloating), and no significant increase in scale weight (i.e. within one pound), as well as an increase in energy. Alternatively, if the cheat meal was unnecessary for metabolic and hormonal recovery, you are likely to notice increased scale weight, water retention, and no obvious changes in energy levels.

Frequency: If your cheat did not have the intended results, it is likely you were not depleted to the point of needing a hormonal boost, but upon a more extended period of dieting and lower caloric intake, you may notice signs that warrant another attempt. The telltale signs that it's time for a cheat meal include lethargy, insatiable hunger, decreased performance, and weight-loss plateaus. If your initial cheat meal was a success, it is expected that another cheat will be necessary within at least the same time frame, if not sooner.

A combination of appearance, energy levels, and body composition changes can be used to assess the need for regular cheat meals and develop a consistent schedule to pre-emptively avoid weight-loss plateaus. When the body begins to look smaller as it becomes depleted of glycogen, as gym performance and strength are compromised, and as body fat levels are no longer declining despite a continued caloric deficit, it is likely time to cheat.

Make Cheat Meals Work for You

By treating cheat meals as a strategic and integral tool within a fat-loss diet, you can not only achieve greater levels of leanness through maintaining a healthy metabolism, but also benefit from the psychological break a cheat meal often brings. Although I do not implement cheat meals to give myself any sort of emotional break from diet, it's a bonus for many who struggle with extreme restriction. This works, as long as the dieter is able to practice self-control and avoid unplanned cheats.

Although cheat meals are not something all coaches implement, I have found success in using this method both personally as well as with clients, especially in combination with a traditional whole-foods diet. I believe many athletes can benefit from the inclusion of cheat meals into their programming as long as they are implemented strategically and with purpose.

Section 2: Training

Chapter 4

Muscle Mass, Strength, and Mobility: Choose 3

John Rusin

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. John Rusin is not your run-of-the-mill physical therapist and coach. His vision and knowledge brings together high-performance strength and hypertrophy programming with cutting-edge, pain-free training methodology. With more than a decade of high level training experience and advanced degrees in both exercise science and physical therapy, Dr. Rusin develops performance, regeneration, and aesthetics programs for all his clients using the same care and focus as he does when programming for some of the world's best power athletes, NFL and MLB athletes, competitive powerlifters, and bodybuilders.

If you've resolved to pack on more muscle while maintaining your strength and functionality, you've come to the right place.

This is not your average hypertrophy program. During this three-month program, I will personally take you step by step into building up your lean muscle mass, one custom-built training session at a time.

The Goal:

Our primary goal in this program is to pack some muscle armor onto your frame. We'll do it with intelligently designed programming that will yield next-level leanness and functional strength. What good is adding muscle if you can't use it or if you spend your days in pain?

The Schedule:

This program is designed around four heavy training days per week, broken down into upper and lower body splits. Within the six two-week phases are strategically placed regeneration weeks. By using variations of the big movements, we'll keep you fresh and peaking at just the right time.

Monday - lower body heavy

Tuesday - upper body heavy

Wednesday - LISS (low intensity, steady state) cardio recovery

Thursday - lower body pump

Friday - upper body pump

Saturday -LISS cardio recovery

Sunday – off

Equipment Needs:

This program requires some mainstream gym equipment. If you belong to a health club or big box gym, this program will work perfectly. For those of you who work out at home or have limited gym equipment, the programming can be modified to your specific equipment and needs. That is what we use the forum for!

A Note on Notation:

Set notation: sets x reps @ rest, in seconds

Superset notation: When you see an a., b., etc., do these as supersets. Unlike many supersets you may have done in the past, you still take the programmed rest period between opposing movements.

So this:

1. Machine hamstring curl 3x10@30 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Back squat 5x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Reverse lunge 4x8@60 (2 ramp up sets)
4. Barbell RDL 3x10@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 4a. Leg extension 4x20@30 (1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Leg curl 4x20@30 (1 ramp up set)
5. Standing calf raises 3x30@45 (1 ramp up set)

Means you do this:

1. 2 ramp up sets and 3 work sets of 10 reps machine hamstring curls, resting 30 seconds after each set
 2. 3 ramp up sets and 5 work sets of 6 reps back squats, resting 60 seconds after each set
 3. 2 ramp up sets and 4 sets of 8 reps reverse lunges, resting 60 seconds after each set
 4. 1 ramp up set and 3 work sets of 10 reps barbell Romanian deadlift, resting 45 seconds after each set
 - 4a. 1 ramp up set of 20 reps leg extensions, rest 30 seconds
 - 4b. 1 ramp up set of 20 leg curls, rest 30 seconds
- Then repeat this superset 4X:
- 4a. 1 work set of 20 reps leg extensions, rest 30 seconds
 - 4b. 1 work set of 20 reps leg curls, rest 30 seconds
 5. 1 ramp up set and 3 work sets of 30 reps standing calf raises, resting 45 seconds after each set

Chapter 5

Everything You Need to Know About Supersets for Hypertrophy

John Rusin

One of the easiest ways to cut time off your workouts and add a challenging metabolic component to hypertrophy-specific training is by including the intelligent programming of supersets and compound sets.

Not only will supersets allow you to nearly double your overall workload and volume per workout, they can enhance the overall performance of all exercises in your routine while simultaneously packing on some serious muscle armor.

If adding a few slabs of meat to your frame isn't convincing enough, listen up. Maximally loaded supersets using short rest periods can skyrocket your anabolic hormone response during and after exercise. This streamlines you toward your strength and hypertrophy goals - one burning, gut-wrenching set at a time.

Almost sounds too good to be true, right? That's because it just might be.

Improper programming of supersets can lead to increased incidence of traumatic and overuse injuries, while overtraining specific muscle groups and soft tissues alike. Review the simple tips below before you program your training - it could make the difference between personal records and injuries. The choice is yours!

Compound Sets Versus Supersets

Superset: The back-to-back performance of two exercises of opposing muscle groups, with little to no rest in between.

It's common practice in our misinformed fitness culture to use the terms compound sets and supersets interchangeably. This may be okay for the general elliptical-jockey public, but differentiating between these two strategies can be the difference between plateauing with your strength and hypertrophy gains and continuing to throw iron on the bar and muscle on your body month after month.

A compound set is similar to a superset, but with the use of two exercises that activate the same muscle group. Supersets are used primarily to ramp up the metabolic stress of a specific portion of a training session, while saving time in the form of shorter rest periods. Compound sets have an entirely different goal - to add overall volume to a muscle group.

Due to muscular fatigue, compound sets decrease the overall load you're able to handle for an exercise. But they increase your overall set/rep scheme for a given

pair of movements. Simply said, this method will fry the active muscle groups while keeping your heart pounding through your chest.

More Growth Hormone, Anyone?

The muscle-building efficacy of back-to-back multi-joint exercises with minimal (under thirty seconds) rest is mainly due to your body's endocrine response during and after intense bouts. Heavy loads coupled with little rest increase your circulating blood lactate levels, which increase the acidity of your blood. This increase in blood acidity will trigger the release of growth hormone (GH) from one of the body's most powerful endocrine organs, the pituitary.

Growth hormone is just one hormone in the complex equation of muscle hypertrophy and strength. Testosterone is also released at an increased rate during the performance of near-maximal superset protocols. And directly after a bout of intense training, insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) circulates at increased levels for up to forty hours. This leaves the anabolic window wide open for growth potential and recovery.



Common Mistakes

Programming supersets isn't quite as simple as throwing together two exercises and crushing yourself with as little rest as possible. Here are some of the most common mistakes made when programming supersets, and why they may do more harm than good when incorrectly performed over time:

1. Pre-fatiguing Stabilizing Musculature

Challenging the core during loaded compound lifts is a great way to link body segments and increase overall functionality and performance. But the muscles of the anterior and posterior core are phasic in nature and only able to perform at optimal levels for short periods. If two exercises both challenge the core from an isometric or dynamic stability standpoint, the core will become fatigued, increasing the chance of injury and overuse.

A great example of a bad superset practice I see in the commercial gym setting is supersetting a squat/deadlift with an isolation core exercise such as crunches or the ab wheel. If you are squatting to near maximal intensities, your core will be on fire. No need to kick a horse while it's down and throw in some crunches on top of it!

2. Over-compressing the Spine

Performance of two exercises that both add compression of the spine is commonly seen in poorly programmed supersets. Before choosing your exercises, classify them all into two categories: spinal compressors and spinal decompressors.

An example of a spinal compressor is a squat. Vertebral segments are loaded, and forces are bringing them closer together under loads. A movement that acts as a spinal decompressor adds space between vertebral segments. Examples are a chin up or pull up where the feet are in an open-chain position.

Think of this equation when choosing your combos of exercises for compound or supersets: Compression + Decompression = No Back Pain!

Give your back a break. You're probably already sitting eight hours a day in a slouched posture. The last thing you need is to test your spine's limits, over and over again, during a superset.

3. Ordering of Exercises

The most popular exercise in the gym is undoubtedly the bench press. This is the first, and sometimes only, exercise done by many people on a daily basis for upper-body emphasis.

So, it is no surprise that when putting together supersets, the chest exercise always precedes the back. Bro logic would have you thinking that because you cannot see your back in the mirror, it does not exist. If you can't see it, it's pretty much useless, right? Wrong on so many levels!

By programming a posterior-chain exercise before an anterior chain, the completion of the pull will enhance the performance of the push. By activating stabilizers in both the posterior scapular region and the posterior pelvic girdle, exercises such as upper-body pressing and quad-dominant leg work will be more effective due to increasing reciprocal inhibition and dynamic stability.

Remember, Pull -> Push! Your shoulders and hips will thank me later.

Best Upper-Body Superset Combos

Pull Up / Barbell Standing Overhead Press

Single Arm Dumbbell Row / Barbell Bench Press

Cable Rope Face Pull / Incline Dumbbell Bench Press

Best Lower-Body Superset Combos

Romanian Deadlift / Front Squat

Hip Thrust / Alternating Forward Lunge

Glute-Ham Raise / Leg Press

Best Upper/Lower Body Superset Combos

Back Squat / Chin Up

Front Squat / Parallel Bar Dips

Deadlift / Dumbbell Floor Press

How Long to Rest for Your Specific Goals

The design of your supersets is dependent on your specific goals. Here are some common goals, and how to program according to the type of gains you are after. Follow the prescribed rest period for your training focus:

Rest Periods Between Exercises / Rest Periods Between Sets:

Endurance: :10 / :20

Hypertrophy: :15 / :30

Strength: :30 / :60

Power: :45-60 / :75-90

Because supersets can be demanding from a metabolic and muscular-stress standpoint, the frequency of training specific groupings of exercises and/or functional body units, should be limited to two to three times per week. Adequate rest and recovery are key to progressing your strength for the long run.

The Gains Are Coming

Supersets can be a game changer for your strength and hypertrophy training. But only if they are performed intelligently, using these simple components of program development.

Don't let yourself become stale, continue to challenge yourself, and get more out of the basic compound lifts you know and love. Fitness isn't about reinventing the wheel. It's about getting that wheel turning as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Chapter 6

Shred-telligent Design: How to Ramp Up Your Major Lifts

John Rusin

After hearing for years from trainers, coaches, and therapists that the dynamic warm up is an essential part of any exercise program, everyone finally bought in and stopped stretching for twenty minutes prior to any activity.

This is awesome for the general public looking to stay healthy and get a bit of a sweat dripping off their backs. But for strength athletes, a dynamic warm up is just a piece of the performance puzzle. Consistently moving heavy loads on a frequent basis with the goal of progressively getting bigger, stronger, and more explosive needs some special attention in the warm-up department.

How to Program an Effective Warm Up

Through the programming of ramp-up sets, strength athletes can utilize movement-specific warm ups while not frying their neurological systems in the process. But be careful - if ramp-up sets are programmed ineffectively, they can pre-fatigue musculature and neurological conduction patterns, largely limiting epic performances.

Proceed with knowledge, strategy, and goals in mind and reap the benefits of an intelligently designed movement-specific ramp-up program. Here is an example of a full body dynamic warm up that can be used before any type of training session:

Example Dynamic Warm Up

Jump Squats- 10
Seal Jacks - 15
Prisoner Squat - 10
Push Up - 6 (two-second hold at bottom position)
Alternating Forward Lunges - 6 (per side)
Stick Ups - 10
Band Pull Aparts - 10
Kneeling Psoas Stretch - 30 seconds (per side)

Ramp-Up Sets

If you aren't familiar with the term, ramp-up sets can be defined as preparatory sets of an exercise or movement that are completed with submaximal weight to activate specific musculature and prepare active joints for increased loads and intensities, while also grooving a specific pattern in order to achieve pristine movement

patterns and form. Think of these as a more detailed and customized version of the generalized dynamic warm up.

Though people have started to get pretty good at warming up dynamically before strength and conditioning work, ramp-up sets are usually butchered in the commercial setting. This is likely due to a lack of emphasis on their importance as it pertains to actual performance in the working sets.

By now, everyone has seen a gym bro approach the bench just to knock out twenty reps with the bar flying off his chest, followed by a few reps with a 45-pounder on each side, then move right into the grand finale by unleashing his inner demons on his max-effort press.

I'm going out on a limb by saying there has to be a better way to get warmed up to provide an optimal carry over into your performance, while not limiting the quality of work about to be done.

Ramp-Up Sets in My Hypertrophy Program

In my hypertrophy program, one key staple is the use of strategic ramp-up sets for each movement in a training day. While many programs fail to instruct this detail, I wanted to make it a priority because of a few key advantages that strategically ramping up your weights provides.

First and foremost, the ramp-up sets provide the opportunity to increase your total workout volume by adding a few sets for each movement while staying submaximal in your exertion. Increasing overall volume is advantageous when the goal is packing on extra muscle. Without going crazy like some of the old Arnold routines, which incorporated multiple ramp-up sets in conjunction with set-and-rep schemes of 10x10, we can add a little volume without going overboard.

Second, many foundational strength movements are highly skill-based in nature. The more time you spend under the bar, the better you will be able to find your sweet spot in both the setup and execution of a movement. Don't listen to Allen Iverson. Practice is the key when it comes to moving maximal iron and emphasizing hypertrophy.

As extended practice is utilized over time, the neural system will become more activated, increasing both the synergistic movement patterns that are coordinated by various segments of the body and the motor units available to play a role in moving a load.

Ramping up also provides you a way to judge how a load feels on a daily basis. Though in most hypertrophy and strength programs, lifters are continuously chasing progressive overload, the rate of perceived exertion (RPE) is also important.

Advanced lifters realize that 225 pounds on two separate days of the week may feel different due to other variables in a performance program or lifestyle. Smart (and successful) lifters will adjust accordingly. Appreciating that an internal force is just as important as an external load placed on the body is key in achieving hypertrophy gains for the long run.

Determining Loads Used During Ramp-Up Sets

For most big compound lifts, I have my clients use a three set ramp-up scheme that looks something like this:

Ramp-Up Set 1 - 50% working load for prescribed number of working reps

Ramp-Up Set 2 - 75% working load for half the reps in working sets

Ramp-Up Set 3 - 110% working load for one single rep (explosively)

Working Sets - Prescribed sets, reps, and load

The goal for the first set is to move the weight explosively, tapping into your fast twitch muscle fibers and activating muscles worked during the pattern.

In the second ramp-up set, your reps will be half the number of the prescribed working sets. For example, if you are prescribed 10 sets of 10 reps, your second ramp-up will be done with 5 repetitions. The tempo of this movement should be identical to the tempo used with your working weight.

Note: It pays to know your body and its capabilities in each movement, so take notes during your training sessions whenever possible. Data will become useful as you progress over time.

The final ramp-up set will be completed with a load slightly heavier than the load prescribed in the working sets. This will kick on neural activation and prepare you for your first working set. This set also provides you with an option of boosting your working loads. Based on your RPE on a given day for any movement, attempt to get the most out of your training by boosting your weights slightly and challenging yourself.

Time + Work = Results

Put both the dynamic warm up and ramp-up schemes to good use when designing your own strength training programs, or while you follow along with my hypertrophy-focused program.

Both types of warm ups play a key role in continued progression toward your aesthetic and/or strength goals. So put some time into preparing for each movement, and get ready to reap the benefits.



Bonus: Sample 12-week Program

Hypertrophy phase 1

Hypertrophy 1.1 day 1 lower body heavy

1. Machine hamstring curl 3x6@30 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Back squat 5x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Reverse lunge 4x12@60 (2 ramp up sets)
4. Barbell RDL 3x15@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 4a. Leg extension 4x15@30 (1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Leg curl 4x15@30 (1 ramp up set)
5. Standing calf raises 2x30@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.1 day 2 upper body heavy

1. Face pull 3x6@30 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Bench press 5x5@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Chin up 4x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
4. Slight incline DB bench press 3x12@60 (2 ramp up sets)
5. Single arm DB row 3x15@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. Barbell overhead press 3x12@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 6b. Rear delt raise 3x12@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.1 day 3 lower body pump

1. Hip thrust 3x8@45 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Front squat 5x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)

- 3. Trap bar deadlift 5x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4a. Bulgarian split squat 4x15@0 (1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Bulgarian split squat hold 4x30@60 (1 ramp up set)
- 5. Leg press 4x20 (3 ramp up sets)
- 5a. Bodyweight speed squat 3x25@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 5b. Reverse hyperextension 3x25@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.1 day 4 upper body pump

- 1. Band pull apart 3x6@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Chain/band bench press 4x10@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Wide grip pull-up 4x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4a. Dip 4x12@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 4b. Barbell curl 4x10@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5a. DB curl 3x15@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5b. Triceps push down 3x15@30 (2 ramp up sets) 6a. push-up 2xmax@30 (1 ramp up 10 reps)
- 6b. Hanging L-sit 2X max@30 (1 ramp up 10 secs)

Hypertrophy phase 2

Hypertrophy 1.2 day 1 lower body heavy

- 1. Machine hamstring curl 3x8@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Back squat 6x5@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Step up 4x8@60(2 ramp up sets)
- 4. DB RDL 3x12@30(1 ramp up set)
- 4a. Leg extension 4x10@30(1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Leg curl 4x10@30 (1 ramp up set)
- 5. Standing calf raises 3x30@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.2 day 2 upper body heavy

- 1. Face pull 3x6@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Bench press 5x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Chin up 4x10@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4. Incline DB bench press 3x10@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5. Seated cable row 3x20@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. Barbell push press 3x15@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 6b. Rear delt raise 3x15@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.2 day 3 lower body pump

- 1. Hip thrust 3x8@45 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Front squat 5x12@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Trap bar deadlift 5x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)

- 4a. Bulgarian split squat 4x20@0 (1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Bulgarian split squat hold 4x40@60 (1 ramp up set)
- 5. Leg press 4x15 (3 ramp up sets)
- 5a. Bodyweight speed squat 4x25@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 5b. Reverse hyperextension 4x25@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.2 day 4 upper body pump

- 1. Band pull apart 3x6@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Chain/band bench press 4x12@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Wide grip pull-up 4x10@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4a. Dip 4x15@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 4b. Barbell curl 4x12@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5a. DB curl 3x20@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5b. Triceps push down 3x20@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. Push up 3X max@30 (1 ramp up 10 reps)
- 6b. Hanging L-sit 3xmax@30 (1 ramp up 10 secs)

Hypertrophy phase 3

Hypertrophy 1.3 day 1 lower body heavy

- 1. Seated banded hamstring curl 3x5@30 (1 ramp up set)
- 2. Box squat 4x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Alternating reverse lunge 4x8@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 4. Single leg RDL 3x10@60 (1 ramp up set)
- 4a. Goblet squat 3x8@30 (1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Exercise ball hamstring curl 3x10@30 (1 ramp up set)
- 5. 3-way calf raises 3x10@45 (each way / no ramp up sets)

Hypertrophy 1.3 day 2 upper body heavy

- 1. Single arm face pull 3x5@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Slight incline DB bench press 4x5@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 3. Neutral grip pull up 4x6@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 4. Neutral grip incline DB bench press 3x8@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5. Chest supported row 3x6@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. Dumbbell neutral grip push press 2x8@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 6b. Band pull apart 2x8@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.3 day 3 lower body pump

- 1. Single leg heels elevated glute bridge 3x6@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Goblet squat 4x12@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Trap bar deadlift 4x4@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4. Bulgarian split squat 4x10@60 (2 ramp up set)

- 5. Squat jump 4x15 (1 ramp up set)
- 5a. Bodyweight speed squat 2x25@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 5b. Reverse hyperextension 2x25@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.3 day 4 upper body pump

- 1. Single arm banded row 3x8@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Banded push-up 3x10@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 3. Neutral grip pull-up 3x8@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 4. Pec minor dip 3x12@45 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5. Single arm dumbbell curl 3x8@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 6. Ab wheel 2x8 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy phase 4

Hypertrophy 1.4 day 1 lower body heavy

- 1. Machine hamstring curl 3x10@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Back squat 5x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
 - 3. Reverse lunge 4x8@60 (2 ramp up sets)
 - 4. Barbell RDL 3x10@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 4a. Leg extension 4x20@30 (1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Leg curl 4x20@30 (1 ramp up set)
- 5. Standing calf raises 3x30@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.4 day 2 upper body heavy

- 1. Face pull 3x8@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Bench press 5x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Chin up 4x10@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4. Slight incline DB bench press 3x15@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5. Single-arm DB row 3x12@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. Barbell overhead press 3x10@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 6b. Rear delt raise 3x10@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.4 day 3 lower body pump

- 1. Hip thrust 4x8@45 (2 ramp up sets)
- 2. Front squat 6x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 3. Trap bar deadlift 6x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4a. Bulgarian split squat 4x15@0 (1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Bulgarian split squat hold 4x30@60 (1 ramp up set)
- 5. Leg press 4x10 (3 ramp up sets)
- 5a. Bodyweight speed squat 4x25@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 5b. Reverse hyperextension 4x25@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.4 day 4 upper body pump

1. Band pull apart 3x5@30 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Chain/band bench press 4x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Wide grip pull up 4x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4a. Dip 4x10@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 4b. Barbell curl 4x8@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5a. DB curl 3x10@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5b. Triceps push down 3x10@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. Push up 3X max@30 (1 ramp up 10 reps)
- 6b. Hanging L-sit 3X max@30 (1 ramp up 10 secs)

Hypertrophy phase 5

Hypertrophy 1.5 day 1 lower body heavy

1. Machine hamstring curl 3x12@30 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Back squat 6x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Step up 4x12@60(2 ramp up sets)
4. DB RDL 3x15@30(1 ramp up set)
- 4a. Leg extension 4x10@30(1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Leg curl 4x10@30 (1 ramp up set)
5. Standing calf raises 4x30@45 (no ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.5 day 2 upper body heavy

1. Face pull 3x8@30 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Bench press 6x4@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Chin up 4x12@60 (3 ramp up sets)
4. Incline DB bench press 3x15@60 (2 ramp up sets)
5. Seated cable row 3x15@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. Barbell push press 3x20@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 6b. Rear delt raise 3x20@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.5 day 3 lower body pump

1. Hip thrust 4x8@45 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Front squat 4x15@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Trap bar deadlift 6x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4a. Bulgarian split squat 4x10@0 (1 ramp up set)
- 4b. Bulgarian split squat hold 4x60@60 (1 ramp up set)
5. Leg press 4x25 (3 ramp up sets)
- 5a. Bodyweight speed squat 4x25@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 5b. Reverse hyperextension 4x25@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.5 day 4 upper body pump

1. Band pull apart 4x5@30 (1 ramp up set)
2. Chain/band bench press 6x5@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Wide grip pull up 5x8@60 (3 ramp up sets)
- 4a. Dip 4x15@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 4b. Barbell curl 4x12@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5a. DB curl 3x12@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 5b. Triceps push down 3x12@30 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. Push up 4X max@30 (1 ramp up 10 reps)
- 6b. Hanging L-sit 4X max@30 (1 ramp up 10 secs)

Hypertrophy phase 6

Hypertrophy 1.6 day 1 lower body heavy

1. Seated banded hamstring curl 3x5@30 (1 ramp up set)
2. Box squat 4x6@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Alternating reverse lunge 4x8@60 (2 ramp up sets)
 4. Single leg RDL 3x10@60 (1 ramp up set)
- 4a. Goblet squat 3x8@30 (1 ramp up set)
 - 4b. Exercise ball hamstring curl 3x10@30 (1 ramp up set)
5. 3-way calf raises 3x10@45 (each way / no ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.6 day 2 upper body heavy

1. Single arm face pull 4x5@30 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Slight incline DB bench press 5x5@60 (2 ramp up sets)
3. Neutral grip pull up 5x6@60 (2 ramp up sets)
4. Neutral grip incline DB bench press 4x8@60 (2 ramp up sets)
5. Chest supported row 4x6@60 (2 ramp up sets)
- 6a. DB neutral grip push press 3x8@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 6b. Band pull apart 3x8@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.6 day 3 lower body pump

1. Single leg heels-elevated glute bridge 4x6@30 (2 ramp up sets)
2. Goblet squat 5x12@60 (3 ramp up sets)
3. Trap bar deadlift 5x4@60 (3 ramp up sets)
4. Bulgarian split squat 5x10@60 (2 ramp up set)
5. Squat jump 5x15 (1 ramp up set)
- 5a. Bodyweight speed squat 3x25@45 (1 ramp up set)
- 5b. Reverse hyperextension 3x25@45 (1 ramp up set)

Hypertrophy 1.6 day 4 upper body pump

1. Single arm banded row 4x8@30 (2 ramp up sets)

2. Banded push-up 4x10@60 (2 ramp up sets)
3. Neutral grip pull up 4x8@60 (2 ramp up sets)
4. Pec minor dip 4x12@45 (2 ramp up sets)
5. Single arm DB curl 4x8@45 (1 ramp up set)
6. Ab wheel 3x8 (1 ramp up set)

What do you think? Ready to give it your all to get it all? More Muscle, Less Fat will work for you if you apply it consistently and with precision. Results don't lie - two of the best minds (and bodies) in the business - Kalli Youngstrom and Dr. John Rusin walk their talk every day.

If you'd like more guidance for even greater results, John and Kalli will be personally coaching a group of lucky Breaking Muscle subscribers through an even more in-depth, personalized version of the More Muscle, Less Fat program called **Size or Shred**. SOS is a personalized program to help you build muscle and lose fat at your body's maximum rate.

Rather than hope that your body responds perfectly to the generalized program and that you can figure out the nuances of the training and nutrition science presented here, join John and Kalli and for twelve weeks of the best training results of your life. Your friends will be begging to know what you've been up to as you transform the way you eat, train, feel, and, of course, look.

Get on the program presale list to ensure your spot – to give each trainee the best possible experience only a limited number of applicants will be accepted. To learn more about what being personally coached by John Rusin and Kalli Youngstrom will include, [click here](#). If you're already on the list, sit tight, it's almost time!

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