Asymmetrical Programming

Ugly on paper, beautiful in practice

Is symmetry necessary / useful?

- We are naturally attracted to symmetry, but we are actually asymmetric.
- Does it match the stimulus goals?
- Does it improve the logistics of the program?
- Or is it an unnecessary constraint?
- Intuitive training is almost never symmetrical

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Common application of asymmetrical programming

- Uneven volume distribution
- Uneven Frequency
- Different # of sets/exercises per muscle group
- Varied training variables
- Varied stimulus

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Tetris vs line matching

- Sometimes a good program is where you determine the variables for each exercise and body part independent of the program.
- Then you put the pieces together in a way that suits the stimulus and logistics, but its more like Tetris than matching up lines in a spread sheet.

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Rotating and cycling variables

- Rotation uses acute asymmetry, but can become symmetrical over a micro cycle.
- Asymmetrical mesocycles can become symmetrical over a macrocycle
- Asymmetrical Macrocycles can become symmetrical across multiple macrocycles

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Hybrid Programs and Stimulus Cycling within Microcycles

Common hybrid programs

- Systemic + Local Metabolic
- Systemic + Tension
- Tension + Local Metabolic
- Volume Rotation
- Frequency Rotation
- Volume & Frequency Rotation
- Systemic Rotations
- Architecture Rotations

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Systemic + Local Metabolic

- Accomplish a goal of a total systemic stimulus (or time maximizing lower priority body parts) while also achieving a local stimulus is specific muscles.
- Also serves as a way to apply volume asymmetrically
- Can be done as separate body parts, synergist body parts, or even added volume to the same body parts
  - Sys Lower + Local Upper
  - Sys Lower + Local Glutes
  - Sys Lower + finisher set for lower body parts in isolation

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Systemic + Tension

- Accomplish a goal of a total systemic stimulus (or time maximizing lower priority body parts) while also achieving a tension/hypertrophy is specific muscles.
- Also serves as a way to apply volume asymmetrically
- Can be done as separate body parts, synergist body parts, or even added volume to the same body parts
  - Sys Lower + Tension Upper
  - Sys Lower + Tension Glutes (order depends on exercise selection)
  - Tension Lower body + systemic finisher

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Tension + Local Metabolic

- When done on different body parts
  - Allows for separation of goals, volume, or a way of distributing fatigue.
- Can be a great way of extending a training cycle through fatigue management and recovery optimization.
- When done on synergist or same body parts
  - Volume has to be considered so you don't run into a kitchen sink problem of too much volume across too broad of range of stress.
  - Serves as a way of increasing the intensity range covered, and can support maintenance of some metabolic adaptations for maintaining recovery (but this inverts with too much volume)

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Tension + Local Metabolic Examples

- Agonist Antagonist cycling
  - Monday - Chest tension + Back Metabolic
  - Thursday - Back tension + Chest Metabolic
- Synergist
  - Monday - Chest/Back Tension + arms/delts Metabolic
  - Thursday - Arms / Delts Tension + Chest & Back metabolic
- Non Competing
  - Quads tension + Arms Metabolic

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Tension + Local Metabolic Examples

- Undulations
  - Mon - Upper Metabolic
  - Tue - Lower Tension
  - Thr - Upper Tension
  - Fri - Lower Metabolic

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Volume Rotations

- Allows for greater focus in single sessions.
- Allows for within muscle group prioritization
- Works great for muscle groups that can be differentiated.
- Usually applied when there is a constraint on time or frequency rather than an maximizing strategy.
- Can be combined with a stimulus change if the volume is appropriate.

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Volume Rotations examples

- Upper 1
  - HV chest & elbow flexion, LV back and triceps
- Upper 2
  - HV back and triceps, LV chest and elbow flexion

Volume Rotations examples

- Upper 1
  - HV chest & triceps, LV back and elbow flexion
- Upper 2
  - HV back and elbow flexion, LV chest and triceps

Volume Rotations examples

- 1/4 1
  - HV Upper Push, LV lower Pull
- 1/4 2
  - HV Lower Push, LV Upper Pull
- 1/4 3
  - HV Lower Pull, LV Upper Push
- 1/4 4
  - HV Upper Pull, LV lower Push

Volume Rotations example

- Undulations
  - Mon - Upper (high push, low pull)
  - Tue - Lower (high push, low pull)
  - Thr - Upper (high pull, low push)
  - Fri - Lower (high pull, low push)

Asymmetrical Frequency

- Usually used for priority muscle/movement focus
- Often combined with volume and/or stimulus asymmetry, but not always.
- Often overlaps with a goal of getting more exercise selection in, under contained conditions.
- Can be a way of “sprinkling” volume where it would be less ideal to have greater per session volumes.
- Can work as a way of alternating spams

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Asymmetrical Frequency Examples

- Priority body parts trained 2-4x per week, with lower priority 1-2x per week
- Mon - Chest & Back
- Tue - Quads Biased lower
- Thr - Chest & Arms
- Fri - Ham biased lower

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Asymmetrical Frequency Examples

- Mon - Delts + Chest Tri
- Wed - Delts + Lower
- Fri - Delts + Back Bi

- Glutes + Quads
- Upper
- Glutes + Hams

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Frequency Rotations

- Used less than other methods of asymmetrical programming.
- Typically combined with volume and/or stimulus asymmetry
- Usually done as a method of undulating volumes over longer segments of sessions.

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Frequency Rotations example

- Week 1
  - High frequency Upper
- Week 2
  - High Frequency Lower

- Week 1
  - High Frequency Chest & Hamstrings/Glutes
- Week 2
  - High Frequency Back and Quads

Volume + Frequency Rotations

- Often used to focus on different training architecture on different days.
- Often works well with a movement based goal combined with hypertrophy or recovery goals.
- Can be done to Integrate body part days into higher frequency splits

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Volume + Frequency Rotations Example

- Squat & Deadlift day rotation across weeks
- HB, HB + FB variations
  - HV vs LV, Tension vs Metabolic rotations
  - Priority + (FB-priority) + FB

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Systemic Rotation examples

- HB, HB, FB sys
- HB,HB, FB meta

- HB1 sys, HB2 tension, then invert

Architecture Rotation examples

- Alternating order supersets
- Set method rotations
  - Cluster -> Drop Sets
  - Super sets -> Drop sets
  -

Exercise Order rotations

- It doesn’t have to be super complicated
- Rotating exercise order can be a way of using acute asymmetry for a specific goal or symmetry across muscle groups across sessions in higher frequency programming, or muscle regions across lower frequency programming.

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Asymmetrical Reasoning

- Endless ways to mix and rotate.
- What is the goal?
  - Stimulus, volume, and frequency goals
  - Stimulus optimizations vs fatigue management
  - Time/volume management
  - Priority volume/stimulus distribution

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The best programs are made based around the best “why’s”

- This is the key to choosing the the right tools from a box of a million tools.
- This is where we will start next week.