You can’t deny it—part of the appeal of lifting weights and building muscle is to look and feel more powerful than the next guy. To be the alpha male among your buddies. But to do this, you have to be willing to work harder and more ferociously than they are. This month, we bring you a plan that’s excerpted from our book *Man 2.0 Engineering the Alpha*. It builds muscle, shreds abs, and streamlines your gym time, so you can rule the weight room and then get back to ruling your world outside it. This is highly evolved fitness.
HOW IT WORKS

○ The theme here is density training. Each time you repeat a workout, the goal will be to get more work done than the session before without increasing your training time. We group your exercises (as supersets or mini circuits) and assign each group a time frame. You'll do as many reps as you can in that period for each lift, and work to increase that number over time.

To do it, you'll have to shave down your rest periods and push yourself harder, which will result in getting stronger, improving endurance, and burning more calories. In four weeks, you should be seeing the beginnings of a body that's evolved to the next level.

DIRECTIONS

FREQUENCY: Perform each workout (Day 1, 2, 3, and 4) once per week. The order of the sessions will rotate weekly, so see the chart on the bottom of this page for a full four-week training schedule. You may perform cardio of your choice on the days where it is indicated.

HOW TO DO IT: Perform the paired exercises (marked “a” and “b”) as supersets. Alternate them back and forth, resting as needed, until the allotted time is up. Exercises marked “a,” “b,” and “c” are a circuit—complete one set of each in turn—and continue for the prescribed time. After you run through a pair or circuit for one block of time, you’ll rest and then repeat it once more with more weight or for a longer duration. You’ll rest again, and then move on to the next group.

Training Schedule

The order of the workouts will rotate for maximum gains.

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DAY 1

1a Front Squat

- Grasp the bar at shoulder width and raise your elbows up so your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Nudge the bar off the rack and walk it out of the rack. Plant your feet at shoulder width and turn your toes slightly out. Squat down as deeply as you can without losing the arch in your back.

Alternate exercises for 5 minutes. Afterward, rest 3–5 minutes, and then repeat the superset with 5–10% more weight for another 5 minutes. Rest 3–5 minutes and go on to exercises 2a, 2b, and 2c.

1b Bentover Row

- Stand holding the bar at shoulder width and bend your hips back until your torso is parallel to the floor. Keep your lower back in its natural arch and bend your knees as needed. Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you row the bar to your belly. Do not bounce reps.

2a Reverse Lunge

- Hold a dumbbell in each hand and step backward with one leg. Lower your body until your rear knee nearly touches the floor and your front thigh is parallel to the floor.

Alternate for 4 minutes. Afterward, rest 2 minutes, then repeat for another 5 minutes.

2b Upright Row

- Hold the bar at almost twice shoulder width, palms down, and raise it in front of your body until your elbows are bent 90 degrees. Your elbows should not be higher than shoulder level.

3a EZ-bar Curl

- Hold an EZ bar with a shoulder-width grip. Keeping your elbows close to your sides, curl the bar.

Alternate for 4 minutes. Afterward, rest 2 minutes, then repeat for another 5 minutes.

3b Lateral Raise

- Hold a dumbbell in each hand and raise the weights 90 degrees out to your sides.

Cycle through the exercises for 5 minutes. Afterward, rest 3–5 minutes and then repeat the circuit with 3–5% more weight for another 6 minutes. Rest 3–5 minutes and go on to exercises 3a and 3b.
Your Workout

DAY 2

1a
Romanian Deadlift

- Grasp the bar at shoulder width and bend your hips back. Keeping your lower back arched and the bar pulled in against your body, lower your torso until you feel an intense stretch in the hamstrings. Extend your hips to come back up.

- Alternate exercises for 5 minutes. Afterward, rest 3–5 minutes, and then repeat the superset with 5–10% more weight for another 5 minutes. Rest 3–5 minutes, and go on to exercises 2a, 2b, and 2c.

1b
Push Press

- Hold the bar at shoulder width and nudge it off the rack. Keep your forearms perpendicular to the floor. Quickly bend your hips and dip your knees to gather momentum and then explosively press the bar overhead.

1c
Pullup

- Hang from the bar with hands just outside shoulder width. Pull yourself up until your chin is over the bar. If pullups are too difficult, you can perform lat pulldowns.

2a
Pullup

- Hang from the bar with hands just outside shoulder width. Pull yourself up until your chin is over the bar. If pullups are too difficult, you can perform lat pulldowns.

2b
Goblet Squat

- Hold a dumbbell or kettlebell (as shown) with both hands at shoulder level. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and toes turned out slightly. Bend your hips back and squat as low as you can.

2c
Pushup

- Keep your body straight with your abs braced. Lower your body until your chest is one inch above the floor.

- Cycle through the exercises for 6 minutes. Afterward, rest 3–5 minutes and then repeat the circuit with 3–5% more weight for another 6 minutes. Rest 3–5 minutes, and go on to exercises 3a and 3b.

3a
Barbell Calf Raise

- Set up a barbell as if to squat, but stand on a block or step. Lower your heels toward the floor so you feel an intense stretch and then raise them as high as you can.

- Alternate for 4 minutes. Afterward, rest 2 minutes, then repeat for another 5 minutes.

3b
Dumbbell Flye

- Hold a dumbbell in each hand and lie back on a flat bench. Press the weights over your chest with palms facing each other. Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, lower the weights out and away from your body until you feel a deep stretch in your pecs. Bring your arms back up.

Choose the Right Weight

- For every a and b exercise in each workout, choose a weight you’re sure you can lift 8–12 times.
- For every a, b, and c circuit, choose a weight you can lift 12–15 times.
- Do not go to failure on any set. If you choose a weight that allows you 8–12 reps, perform only half that many reps on your first set (4–6). You need to delay fatigue in order to keep going for the allotted time. Ultimately, it doesn’t matter how many reps you get per set. Just keep track of the total for each lift and try to beat it the next time.

The number of electric impulses per second at which nearly all the muscle fibers in a muscle are recruited. This amount of energy allows you to do a set of eight reps to failure.
**DAY 3**

**1a**
Trap-bar Deadlift

> Use a trap bar (aka hex bar) and grasp the high handles. Your feet should be hip width. Keeping your back flat, extend your hips to stand straight up.

- Alternate exercises for 5 minutes. Afterward, rest 3–5 minutes and then repeat the superset with 5–10% more weight for another 5 minutes. Rest 3–5 minutes and go on to exercises 2a, 2b, and 2c.

**1b**
High Pull

> Hold the bar at almost twice shoulder width and bend your hips back to lower the bar below your knees. Keeping your lower back in its natural arch, explosively extend your hips and come up onto the balls of your feet as you pull the bar to chest level, driving your elbows back.

**2a**
Reverse Lunge

> See Day 1.

**2b**
Face Pull

> Attach a rope handle to the top pulley of a cable station and grasp an end in each hand with palms facing you. Pull the rope to your face, flaring your elbows out until your upper back is fully contracted.

**3a**
Rear-delt Flye

> Hold a dumbbell in each hand and, keeping your lower back arched, bend your hips back until your torso is parallel to the floor. Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you raise the weights out 90 degrees to your sides.

- Alternate for 4 minutes. Afterward, rest 2 minutes, then repeat for another 5 minutes.

**3b**
Reverse Curl

> Hold an EZ-curl bar with hands shoulder width and palms down. Curl the bar up while keeping your elbows close to your sides. Do not let your elbows drift forward.

- Cycle through the exercises for 6 minutes. Afterward, rest 3–5 minutes and then repeat the circuit with 3–5% more weight for another 6 minutes. Rest 3–5 minutes, and go on to exercises 3a and 3b.

**DAY 4**

**1a**
Romanian Deadlift

> See Day 2.

- Alternate exercises for 5 minutes. Afterward, rest 3–5 minutes and then repeat the superset with 5–10% more weight for another 5 minutes. Rest 3–5 minutes, and go on to exercises 2a, 2b, and 2c.

**1b**
Push Press

> See Day 2.

**2a**
Seated Calf Raise

> Use a seated calf raise machine or place dumbbells on your thighs. Lower your heels toward the floor until you feel a deep stretch in your calves. Raise your heels as high as you can.

- Alternate for 4 minutes. Afterward, rest 2 minutes, then repeat for another 5 minutes.

**2b**
Reverse Lunge

> See Day 1.

**2c**
Squeeze Press

> Hold a dumbbell in each hand and lie back on a flat bench. Squeeze the weights together over your chest and then press up. Keep the tension constant throughout the set.

- Cycle through the exercises for 6 minutes. Afterward, rest 3–5 minutes and then repeat the circuit with 3–5% more weight for another 6 minutes. Rest 3–5 minutes, and go on to exercises 3a and 3b.

**3a**
Inverted Row

> Set a barbell in a power rack or Smith machine so that you can hang underneath it with hands shoulder width. Keeping your body straight, squeeze your shoulder blades together and pull yourself up until your chest reaches the bar.

**3b**
Hack Squat

> Use a hack squat machine and stand with feet shoulder width. Squat as low as you can.

**3c**
Shrug

> Hold a barbell at shoulder width and shrug your shoulders as high as you can.