



A large section of exercise science is dedicated to performance and efficiency, a move that has placed the emphasis of many training modalities on function. This forms the basis of conditioning and weight training for performance.

However, another, and possibly bigger – and at least more mainstream – section of exercise science is physique orientated. Of course, a distinction like this is actually a bit reductionist and simple, because training for function has physique spinoffs, and training for physique has a myriad performance benefits.

Nevertheless, when looking at the body as a system there is quite possibly a paradigm shift waiting to happen in how people train their physiques; how they train their muscles to achieve a particular look, while still enjoying

performance and health and fitness spinoffs.

Body building caters to the needs and wants of a very wide spectrum of people from both sexes. From beach-body guys you would typically see in a fashion shoot all the way to mass monster Mr. Olympia competitors, or from bikini competitors to female bodybuilders, there are various body sizes, levels of conditioning and types of 'looks'. And so, when we refer to body building we refer to the endeavour to achieve a particular type of look through resistance training (and diet). There are some constants that run through the various divisions and federations, and these are condition, proportion and symmetry.

A theory on a possible new training split that could change the game

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

» BY SEAN JOHNSON, Bowen Practitioner and Instructor (www.bowentechnique.co.za)

EVOLUTION

Evolution is, ironically, the only constant phenomenon in the universe. It is the striving of a species to constantly adapt to ensure its continued survival. This survival is dependent on the species' ability to evolve to the best possible version of itself to overcome challenges within its environment.

This concept of evolution is very much prevalent within the training fraternity, as athletes try and create adaptation (strength, performance, muscularity, proportions and symmetry) within their bodies to meet certain (environmental) division requirements. Athletes that are best able to adapt to this process are the ones who come out on top.

Evolution, by its nature, is a slow,

consistent process and adaptations within species can take millions of years. There are, however, many similarities between evolution as a process and what it takes to make it in the world of sport and bodybuilding. All successful sportsmen and body builders will tell you that it takes small, consistent and patient changes to your performance and physique to be a really successful athlete.

Even though this adaptive process is slow and patient, there is an exception to the rule (as with all things in life). Our human brain, for example, has tripled in size over the last 200,000 years. Scientists are still trying to figure out what caused this to happen, but the important thing here is the slow, consistent process of evolution was interrupted. Instead of making

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small, incremental changes in our brains, we as a species took a quantum leap forward and so developed rational thinking, the capacity for language and self-awareness. That quantum leap in brain size forever altered us as a species and changed the course of our history.

The science of training is constantly evolving and athletes

are competing at the highest level and still breaking records or standing on stage, looking bigger, leaner and with better symmetry than ever before. Training methods, diets and understanding hormones are constantly being improved on. As such, athletes are achieving adaptations within their bodies never seen before.

What if, though, we wanted to take a quantum leap forward within training science and bodybuilding, where the smallest adjustment to our training or diet can make the difference between being first or second? What if we made a few small, unique and calculated changes to our training and this in turn caused us to quantum leap our performance and physique to a new level?

ALL GREAT TRUTHS BEGIN AS BLASPHEMIES

George Bernard Shaw, the famous Irish author, said: "All great truths begin as blasphemies". My "bodybuilding blasphemy" is a simple, deductive theory. Theory being the word I stress. It is a hopeful, evolutionary quantum leap into the possible future of bodybuilding and exercise. What if, in the pursuit of a physique with both awesome size and sculpted symmetry, we should no longer train traditional body parts but rather myofascial chains?

Symmetry is achieved through any structure by having equal tone and tension throughout. What if we could understand and know the muscular tension lines throughout our bodies and by training in such a way that tension is equal throughout these lines we could achieve symmetry, equal proportions and more flow and connectivity between muscle groups?

There are different muscle chains that distribute tone and tension throughout your body. Without this tension we would not be able to stand upright, move or lift anything at all, never mind some serious weight in the gym. Bodybuilding by its very nature increases tension throughout your body, but the traditional training approach of training one body part a day generally only hits one part of the chain. Granted, adjusting tone in one part of the chain will definitely have an effect on the rest of the chain (that's why squatting has an overall anabolic effect on the entire body).

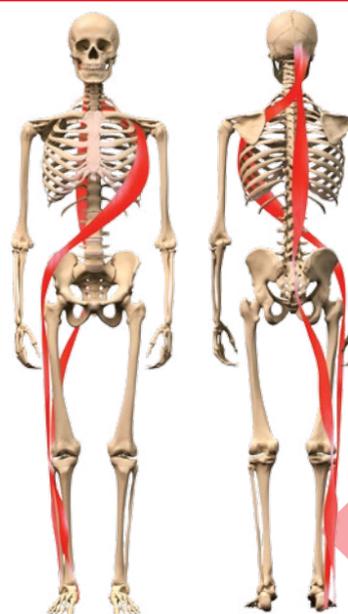
But what happens if we changed our training split to look a little different? What if we stopped speaking in terms of chest, back and legs and started using jargon like superficial back line, arm lines, lateral lines or functional lines? Would we be considered crazy or evolutionary?

If you are leaning more towards crazy have a look at the following myofascial lines of tension that hold your body together before you make your judgement.

MYOFASCIAL LINES



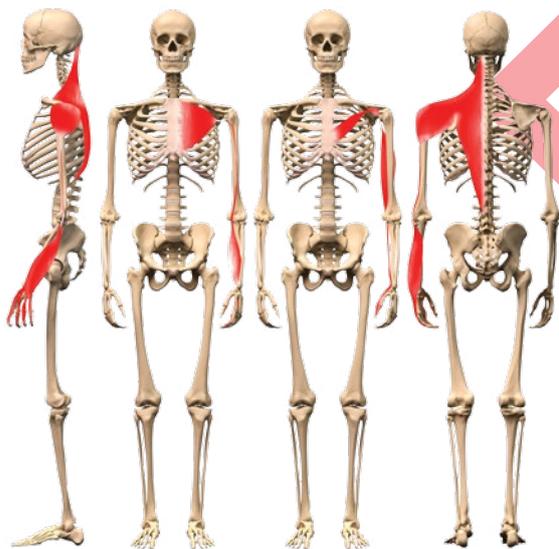
THE SUPERFICIAL FRONT LINE includes the sternocleidomastoid (SCM), sternalis, rectus abdominus, quads and tibialis anterior. It attaches onto the dorsal aspect of each toe and runs up along the front of the body to the fascia of the scalp. A training split which includes chest, stomach, quads and dorsiflexion movement of the feet would help adjust tone through this line. The Superficial Front Line and Superficial Back Line have a reciprocal relationship and work together in maintaining balance and posture.



THE SUPERFICIAL BACK LINE incorporates the erector spinae of the back, hamstrings, and gastrocs of the calves. It attaches on the brow ridge and runs along the back of our body right into each of our toes. Deadlifts tend to hit most of this chain all at once, but a training split can be broken up to include back, hamstrings and calves.

THE SPIRAL LINE doesn't include too many of the traditional body building muscle groups, but if we want balance and symmetry throughout our body then it is important to understand its function within the body. It starts in the splenius capitus, a broad, strap-like muscle in the back of the neck, and includes the rhomboids, obliques, abdominal fascia, tibialis anterior, peroneus, ITB, hamstrings and erector spinae. You can see by the picture that it wraps itself around the body and has a big function to play in twists, rotations and lateral shifts in the body. If, for example, there is uneven tension between the tibialis anterior (too little tension) and the peroneus longus, a superficial muscle in the lateral compartment of the leg (too much tension) this would cause a pronated foot and a therefore a dropped arch. The tibialis connects to the anterior superior iliac spine via the ITB and the peroneus to the ischial tuberosity via the hamstrings. The differing tension states would cause an anterior (down and forward) pelvic tilt, which would cause a bodybuilder to present with a belly as opposed to a flat stomach, making that elusive x-frame even harder to achieve. So having yourself assessed to see where and how your body is asymmetric might be a good idea if you want to stand on stage with balanced proportions. Sometimes things need to be released as opposed to tightened to create balance in tone.

[FEATURE]



THE ARM LINES are another interesting combination of muscle chains. There are front and back arm lines. The Front Lines (there are superficial and deep lines) include the pectoralis, biceps and flexor group of forearm muscles, while the Back Arm Lines (superficial and deep) include the rhomboids, rotator cuff muscles, triceps, trapezius, deltoids and extensor group of the forearm. The Arm Lines do not form part of the structural column of the body, but connect effortlessly with the other muscle chains to enable us to push or pull or hold something. A training split for the Front Arm Lines can include the following muscle groups: chest, biceps and forearms. A split for the Back Arm Lines can include shoulders, traps, triceps and forearms.

PURSUIT OF PROPORTION

Every season South Africa produces a new crop of performance athletes, sports people and amazing muscle, fitness and bikini division athletes. There are constantly new athletes appearing on the scene, all of them trying their best to force adaptation in their bodies through diet, training and discipline. Some of them rely on genetics while others rely on the sweat of hard work to achieve their results. Either way, they achieve this because their bodies have an amazing evolutionary adaptability. Our bodies are incredible biofeedback mechanisms, each one responding differently to stimuli. Muscle athletes understand this amazing process better than anyone else and harness this power to make changes to their physique.

Standing on stage with a well-proportioned physique is the evolutionary pinnacle of the process of body building and what our bodies are capable of. It is something most people will never know. So if you fall into this very small competitive group of people, next time you visualise what you want to look like when you stand under the stage lights keep in mind that if you do what you've always done, all you'll get is what you've always got.

Maybe the time has come to consider taking a quantum leap into the unknown and we might just be very surprised at the size and symmetry we are able to achieve within our bodies.

THEORETICAL TRAINING SPLIT:

- **DAY 1 - Superficial Back Line:** Back, hamstrings and calves
- **DAY 2 - Superficial Front Line:** Core/stomach, quads and dorsiflexion calf training
- **DAY 3 - Front Arm Line:** Chest, biceps and forearms (flexor group)
- **DAY 4 - Back Arm Line:** Shoulders, triceps and forearms (extensor group)
- **DAY 5 - Functional Lines:** Chest, stomach, adductors, lats and quads. *This day does not need to be a heavy lifting day. You should have done the work earlier on in the week. As such these body parts can be trained together in a single session. Slow, controlled lifting should be used (allowing the fascia to slowly respond) with a big emphasis on the mind/muscle connection.*
- **DAY 6 - Spiral and Deep Front Line** *This is a non-lifting day, but is still an important part of your training. Find someone that understands these chains so that they can do an assessment for you on tension and tone through these two lines and then create symmetry through them. It will make a big difference to your overall stage presentation and symmetry.*
- **DAY 7 - Rest** ■

The Deep Front Line is the base on which a body with symmetry is built



THE DEEP FRONT LINE doesn't include the traditional bodybuilding muscle groups, but has a major influence on the body's structural posture. It includes the tibialis posterior, adductor magnus, pelvic floor fascia, psoas, diaphragm, pericardium of the heart and the jaw muscles. It lifts the inner arch, stabilises each segment of the legs, stabilises the chest to allow for breathing, supports the lower back and balances the head on top of the neck. Tension states through this muscle chain would create shortening in the body and create imbalance throughout the other muscle chains. It really is the base on which a body with symmetry is built and what you want through this chain is not tension, but a nice even tone throughout the deep front line's slow twitch, endurance muscle fibres.



THE FUNCTIONAL LINES (there are two of them - a front and back line) have less to do with core posture and stability and more to do with everyday movements. The Front Lines includes the lower edge of the pectoralis major, rectus abdominis and adductors, while the Back Lines incorporate the the lats, glutes and vastus lateralis (the outer quad muscle). The unique thing about them is if you have a look at the accompanying diagram they create tension lines in the shape of an X across the body, and isn't the X-frame what muscle athletes try and attain?

Sean Johnson is a Bowen Practitioner and Instructor, with a practice based in Randburg, Johannesburg. He has played provincial rugby at senior level in South Africa and in Australia. Following a herniated disc Sean's playing career was in jeopardy, but he then found Bowen Therapy and made a successful return to the field. Bowen Therapy did what doctors said was impossible, which had an indelible impact on Sean's life. He therefore became a certified Bowen practitioner and later an instructor. Email sean@bowentechnique.co.za for more info or visit him at The Yoga Republic in Gertrude Road, Fountainbleau.