

Bodybuilding Competition Guide

By Brian D. Johnston

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The information in this manual is intended only for healthy men and women. People with health problems should not follow the suggestions without a physician's approval. Before beginning any exercise or dietary program, always consult with your doctor.

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The information provided in this manual refers to amateur based contests. Professional level competitions have a somewhat different layout. Furthermore, competition procedures are routinely restructured for higher efficiency and entertainment, and may not completely reflect what is found in this section. Contact the governing body for complete competition details.

Weight classes

There are several weight classes in a competition, and depending on the level and type of competition, a contest can have as few as one (open), or as many as seven. The promoter will document the divisions on the entry form. The International Federation of Body Builders (IFBB) has set out rules regarding weight classes as follows:

Senior Men's

Bantamweight (up to & incl. 65 kg or 143 lbs)
Lightweight (up to & incl. 70 kg or 154 lbs)
Welterweight (up to & incl. 65 kg or 165 lbs)
Middleweight (up to & incl. 80 kg or 176 lbs)
Light heavyweight (up to & incl. 90 kg or 198 lbs)
Heavyweight (over 90 kg or 198 lbs)

Senior Women's

Lightweight (up to & incl. 52 kg or 114½ lbs)
Middleweight (up to & incl. 57 kg or 125½ lbs)
Heavyweight (over 57 kg or 125½ lbs)

Junior Men's

Lightweight (up to & incl. 70 kg or 154 lbs)
Middleweight (up to & incl. 80 kg or 176 lbs)
Heavyweight (over 80 kg or 176 lbs)

Junior Women's

Lightweight (up to & incl. 52 kg or 114½ lbs)
Middleweight (over 52 kg or 114½ lbs)

Master Men's

Lightweight (up to & incl. 80 kg or 176 lbs)
Heavyweight (over 80 kg or 176 lbs)

Master Women's

There is one open category in master women's competition

Mixed-Pairs

There is one open category in mixed-pairs competition

Age categories

At Junior and Masters competitions the competitor must produce evidence of date of birth. This can be with a birth certificate, Baptismal certificate, driver's license or passport.

Juniors

To compete as a junior, the competitor must be under the age of 21.

Masters

To compete as a master, men must be 40 years of age or older and women must be 35 years of age or older.

Seniors

This is a general classification and allows anyone to compete at any age. Note that competition is the hardest in this category since most bodybuilders at their physical peak enter this classification. Juniors and masters may find this level of competition too advanced, depending on the number of years they have trained, and degree of development.

Weigh-in

On the day of competition (and sometimes the day prior to a very large competition) in the morning, the officials will require each competitor to 'weigh in' to determine which weight category he/she belongs. Posing attire (trunks, bikini), will be the only clothing worn during the weigh-in. Besides the entry form, the weigh-in is also part of the registration, finalizing the athlete's intention of competing.

At this time the bodybuilder will need to produce a membership card and posing music on cassette tape. Bodybuilders can obtain a form for membership from their local bodybuilding association. It is best to apply well in advance of the contest to avoid any delays in receiving a card.

Procedures for Individual Competition

There is a standard structure and set of rules regarding the different rounds, what the competitors are responsible to do on stage and the order of such tasks. Regulations may differ and are regularly updated (this section could be outdated or not completely applicable with some organizations), so contact the hosting organization for contest specifics.

What the judges look for during a competition

1. Muscularity (well-developed, shapely muscles with lack of body fat and good muscle separation).
2. Definition (a thin-skin appearance that shows muscle detail such as striations and fine lines - - it is possible to be highly defined without being muscular).
3. Symmetry (pleasing silhouette -- do the left and right halves of the body balance in relation to one another?)
4. Proportion (the size and shape of each muscle in accordance to all other muscles -- e.g., are the triceps too big, too small or just right in relation to the biceps?)
5. Balance (is the development of the upper half of the body in harmony with the development of the lower half of the body?)
6. Shape (does the individual have proper genetics for bodybuilding -- wide shoulders, narrow waist, long muscle bellies, sweeping thighs, etc.)
7. Mass (relates to the amount of muscle a physique can carry).

Pre-judging (round I, a.m.)

Preliminary assessment

The head judge will have all competitors of a weight category (one category judged at a time) come out on stage and 'stand relaxed' shoulder to shoulder. The competitors may also be required to 'stand relaxed' from the back. This affords the judges to view competitors for the first time, and possibly make some initial placings.

Front Standing Relaxed

1. Stand up-right; do not slouch.
2. Spread the lats and arms comfortably wide, but not too wide; spreading the arms further out makes the bodybuilder appear awkward, uncomfortable and unprofessional ('inflamed armpit syndrome') -- doing so will also decrease the shoulder to waist differential.
3. Do not overly tense the pecs as this will bunch up the muscle and take away from upper body width.
4. Tense the deltoids and arms moderately.
5. Pronate the wrists so that the palms are facing somewhat to the rear; this will rotate the upper arm and side deltoids slightly inward to give a thicker, fuller appearance to the arms and deltoids.
6. When contracting the abdominals, draw the stomach in slightly (mini-vacuum), then contract the muscles; contracting without first drawing the stomach in protrudes the abdominal and oblique muscles, thereby widening the waist.
7. Flex the quadriceps and calves, but keep the knees slightly unlocked to give a more natural, comfortable looking stance.



Back Standing Relaxed

1. Stand erect with the lats comfortably wide, but not over-exaggerated.
2. Keep the back flat, not rounded forward as this will make it appear less muscular and narrower.
3. Flex the triceps and rear deltoids slightly to show muscularity.
4. Tighten the abdominals to bring out the muscularity in the low back.
5. Flex the gluteus to lessen hip width, but only if fat content is minimal in this area. Otherwise, fat pockets will be more visible.
6. Flex the hamstrings (this is easy if the knees remain unlocked).
7. Flex the calves by spreading then gripping the stage with the toes. With practice, the calves can easily flex, and show good striations without bending the knees. This is important to remember for other posterior-viewed poses.



- Standing relaxed is more fatiguing than most people realize since the bodybuilder may have to partially flex his/her entire body for 20 minutes or more during the round. It is important to never totally relax the muscles, even when standing in the background, since a competitor never knows when a judge may be looking and deciding.

Heat I (free posing)

After the preliminary assessment, all competitors will leave the stage. Then, each competitor, in numerical order, will be asked to return on stage and perform an individual posing routine. Usually a time limit of 60 to 90 seconds will be enforced. An accomplished poser will accentuate strong points and by turning or twisting the torso, or certain body parts, the competitor can often hide weak points.

This heat will give the bodybuilder an opportunity to show the judges his/her body in the best possible poses. Although it does not carry much weight, as with the compulsory poses, it could be a decisive factor between two close competitors.

The judges look for muscularity combined with an artistic and well choreographed routine. The routine should have a structured flow, displaying all sides of the physique, as well as all major muscle groups.

Free posing allows a bodybuilder to express him/herself in a custom-designed routine. Each bodybuilder poses to his/her choice of music. At 90 seconds, this time frame allows for approximately 15-18 poses. Of course, if the bodybuilder adds gymnastics, wishes to hold a few poses longer, or a series of quick poses, the number alters.

Free posing allows the competitor to show how muscles function and interact with one another. Therefore, be graceful and smooth as the judges and audience will be viewing static poses during the compulsory round. And although one can use the seven compulsories (five for women) as the backbone of a routine, alter their appearance (e.g., lunged double biceps or kneeling side triceps pose) and, of course, add non-compulsory poses. Trying to make each pose slightly original can be difficult, but a slight twist of the torso, an extended leg or raised arm can completely change a compulsory into a trademark pose.

The bodybuilder should commence the routine with his/her second best pose to grab the judges' attention, then finish the routine with his/her best pose as a grand finale. A routine is like a book -- seize attention, suspend attention, then end with a climax. If possible, never start with the double biceps, and end with a most muscular as this sequence has been done to death by just about every other competitor in the history of bodybuilding... and will continue to be done. Do not repeat poses even if the audience enjoys them; stick to the original routine, and leave the stage looking professional, and the judges and audience wanting more.

Selecting the right type of music for a particular body type is important. Slight bodybuilders should not pose to heavy metal music. Very massive bodybuilders should avoid soft classical music. Never pose to a piece of music just because you like it; the selection must suit the body type.

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It is best not to pose to popular songs of the day as there is a good chance that another competitor will be using the same selection. Most people choose Pop music. Therefore, and depending on the body type, select a good classical piece, a rock-blues song or perhaps some New Age music. Another good idea is to dust off an old record from years gone by as the chances of someone else using the same selection is minimal.

Instrumental pieces are best, since songs with singing can be distracting to the presentation if poses do not synchronize with the voice. However, vocal pieces can also be more popular, and can make the audience and judges more receptive.

Although difficult to locate, the best music pieces are those that begin softly, and end with a climax. If it starts quietly, the sound technician will set the volume high and once the finale comes, the thunderous music will knock the socks off the judges and audience. Recommended classical pieces are *The Finale of the Rines of Rome* by Respighi, Mahler's *Second Symphony: The Resurrection*, the ending of Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony*, and the first movement from Schumann's *Second Symphony*.

Stay clear of excessively used classical pieces, such as the theme from *Exodus*, and the *Dawn Sequence* from Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (a.k.a. theme from 2001 a Space Odyssey.)

Heat II (compulsory comparisons)

Once again, all competitors in the weight category will return on stage, line up shoulder to shoulder, and 'stand relaxed'. The head judge may also require competitors to 'stand relaxed' from the back.

The head judge will call a maximum of five competitors forward to compare physiques utilizing the seven compulsory poses (five for women).

- It is necessary for a bodybuilder to try several variations of all the compulsory poses to find out which best suits his/her physique. They should not perform a double biceps pose the same way as 'Mr. Big' just because it looks appropriate for him. You must position hands, arms, legs, torso, and all other body parts in such a manner that each body part flows into one another and looks appropriate. For guidelines on posing possibilities, see pages 10-25.

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Depending on the width of the judges' table, and the number of judges present, competitors may need to perform the poses at different angles, or even rotate his/her body from side to side to show the best angle of each pose to all judges. However, exaggerating this rotation technique can appear awkward.

Each pose must be automatic with all body parts flexing simultaneously. It looks unpolished if a bodybuilder has to place the feet first, looking down at the stage, or if they forget to flex some body parts. Everything should appear spontaneous and fluid.

Although judges should favor the competitors with a harmonious, classical physique, the blocky physique can win if it holds more muscle, or is hard and defined.

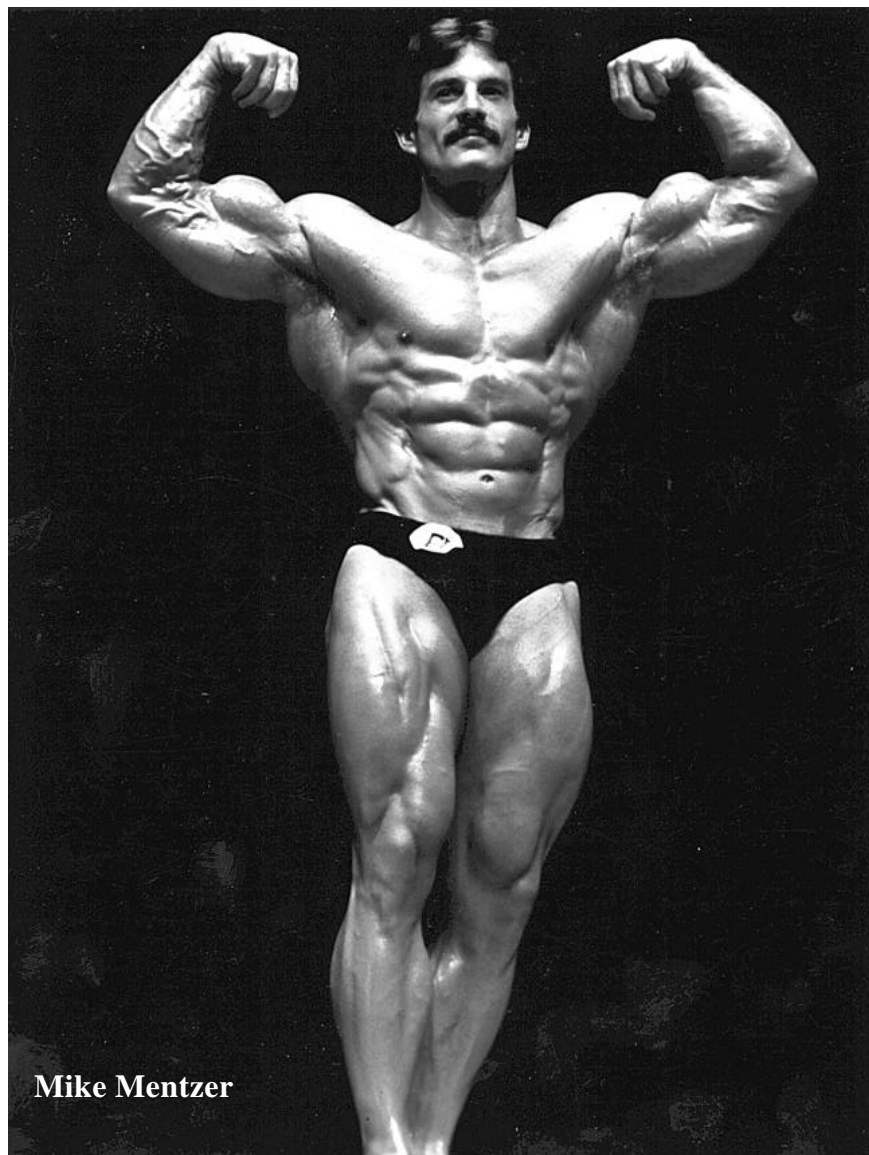
Judges also look for good posture, correct anatomical structure (body framework), wide shoulders, small waist, normal spinal curves, proportioned limbs and trunk, and a healthy skin tone with an absence of acne or tattoos. Some top competitors do have tattoos, yet still do very well, most notably Mr. Olympia, Dorian Yates.

If the judges have difficulty in placing two or three competitors who appear equally developed, the judges will look for faults (weak points) throughout the physiques to help separate competitors.

In some instances, the judges may request the competitors perform the side chest and side triceps poses from both sides. It is best that each competitor be capable of comfortably performing all compulsories, and from all sides and angles. It can also help to show diversification in competition if the competitor can hold the compulsories in at least two versions... so long as a competitor looks good in each version.

Compulsory poses

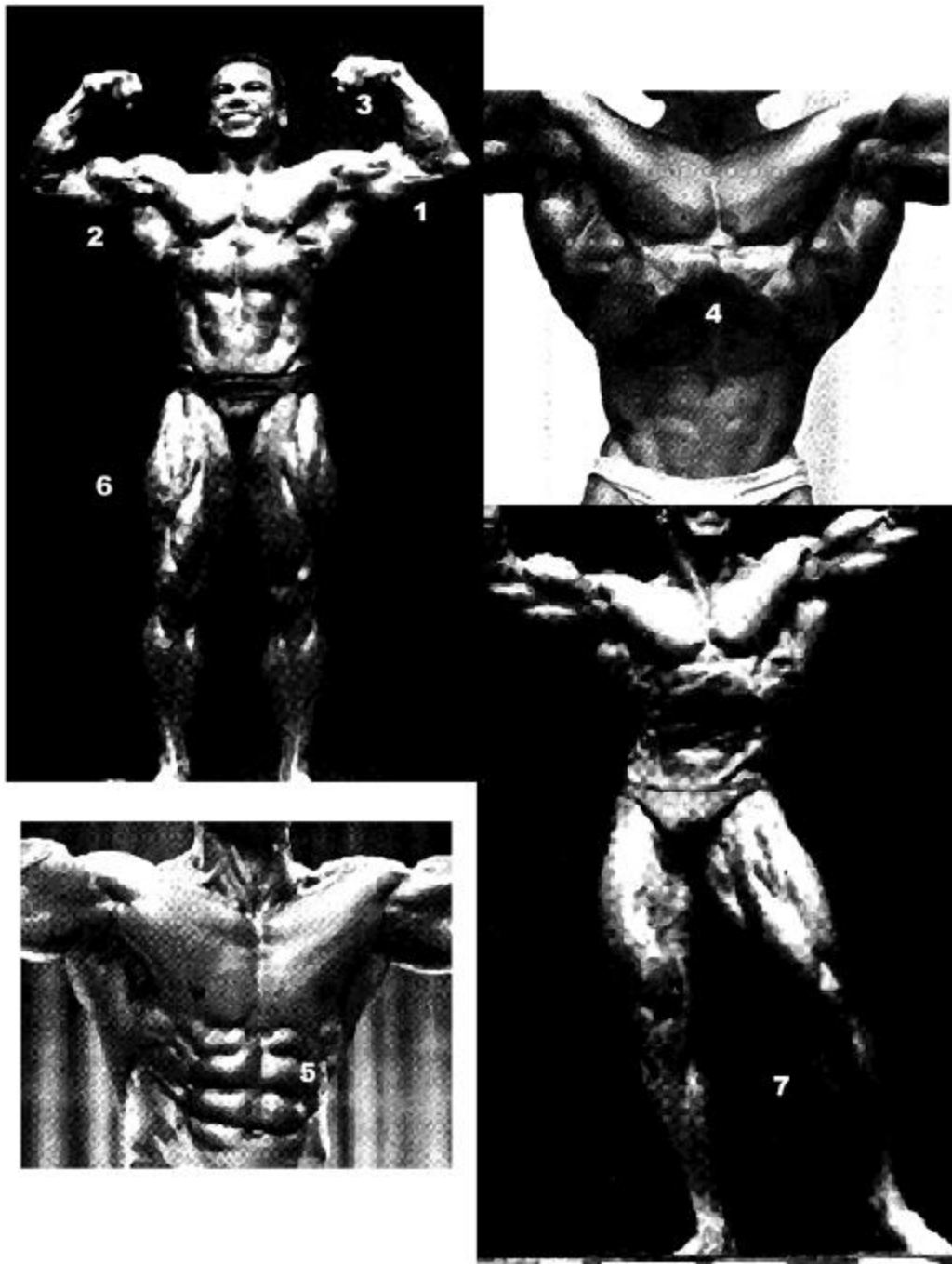
The most important poses a bodybuilding competitor must master are the seven compulsory poses (five for women). These poses account for most points in competition. This being the case, it's somewhat perplexing that so many competitors spend hundreds of hours in the gym, and months dieting, but will spend only a small fraction of time practicing these poses. The following pages provide guidelines on how to hold the seven compulsories (plus an eighth [most muscular] that the judges may request on occasion) in accordance to individual body structure and muscle dimensions.



Front Double Biceps (see next page for diagrams)

1. Place upper arms horizontal to the floor, or tilted up slightly to create a pleasing taper and to maximize arm size and shape; avoid dropping the elbows below parallel, making the pose unattractive.
2. Draw the elbows slightly forward -- doing so will contract and give sweep to the pectorals and lats; lift the rib cage high, and spread the lats wide; do not lean back or lift up excessively in an attempt to increase upper body size, since this makes the torso look flat and long
3. A bodybuilder with a large gap between the elbow and biceps (short muscle belly) should consider pronating the wrists with the palms turned somewhat forward -- this will reduce the biceps' peak by only a small degree, but elongates the biceps to give a fuller look to the arms.
4. A bodybuilder with superior rib cage shape and size, or poor abdominal development, should consider drawing in the stomach to create a vacuum -- this will elevate the pectorals and ribcage, and make the upper body appear even larger.
5. A bodybuilder with superior abdominal development should consider flexing this muscle group; don't flex or squeeze the abs down excessively as this makes the chest drop, causing the upper body to lose some size and the lats to narrow.
6. If the hips remain vertical, extend one leg forward or to the side a few inches with the knees slightly bent -- this will produce a more aesthetic look as opposed to having both legs vertically positioned one beside the other.
7. If the bodybuilder prefers to tilt the hips for a different look, the leg opposite the tilt will be furthest from the body, and to the side; the pressure will remain along the inside and on the ball of the foot near the big toe, with the heel off the floor; female bodybuilders sometime perform a more aesthetic variation of leg stance with the bent leg extended far out to the side as if preparing to perform a side lunge exercise.

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Front Lat Spread (Men Only – see next page for diagrams)

Some people have trouble with this pose. The easiest way to get into position is to stand upright with the lats spread wide and flat, and the arms down along the sides; hold the rib cage held high, with shoulders square and broad; do not lift the torso up excessively as this will elongate the torso and make it appear flat.

1. Make two fists, drawing them into the obliques, thus causing the waist to appear smaller; don't pull from the rear obliques too much as this pulls excess skin and muscle to the front, making the waist look wider than it is.
2. A bodybuilder with high lats or small arms should consider placing the back of the wrists and hands along the sides of the waist -- this will decrease the amount of 'empty space' between the arms and lats, and make the torso and arms appear larger.
3. Draw in the stomach to create a vacuum; few individuals look good flexing their abs in this pose as it drops the ribcage down, thus making the torso and lats look smaller than they actually are.
4. Bring one leg out slightly in front of the other to provide a more aesthetic appearance; keep calves flexed; female competitors who add this pose to their free posing routine can perform a more aesthetic variation of leg stance with the flexed leg extended far out to the side as if preparing to perform a side lunge exercise, or while standing on their toes to give the illusion of height and greatness.

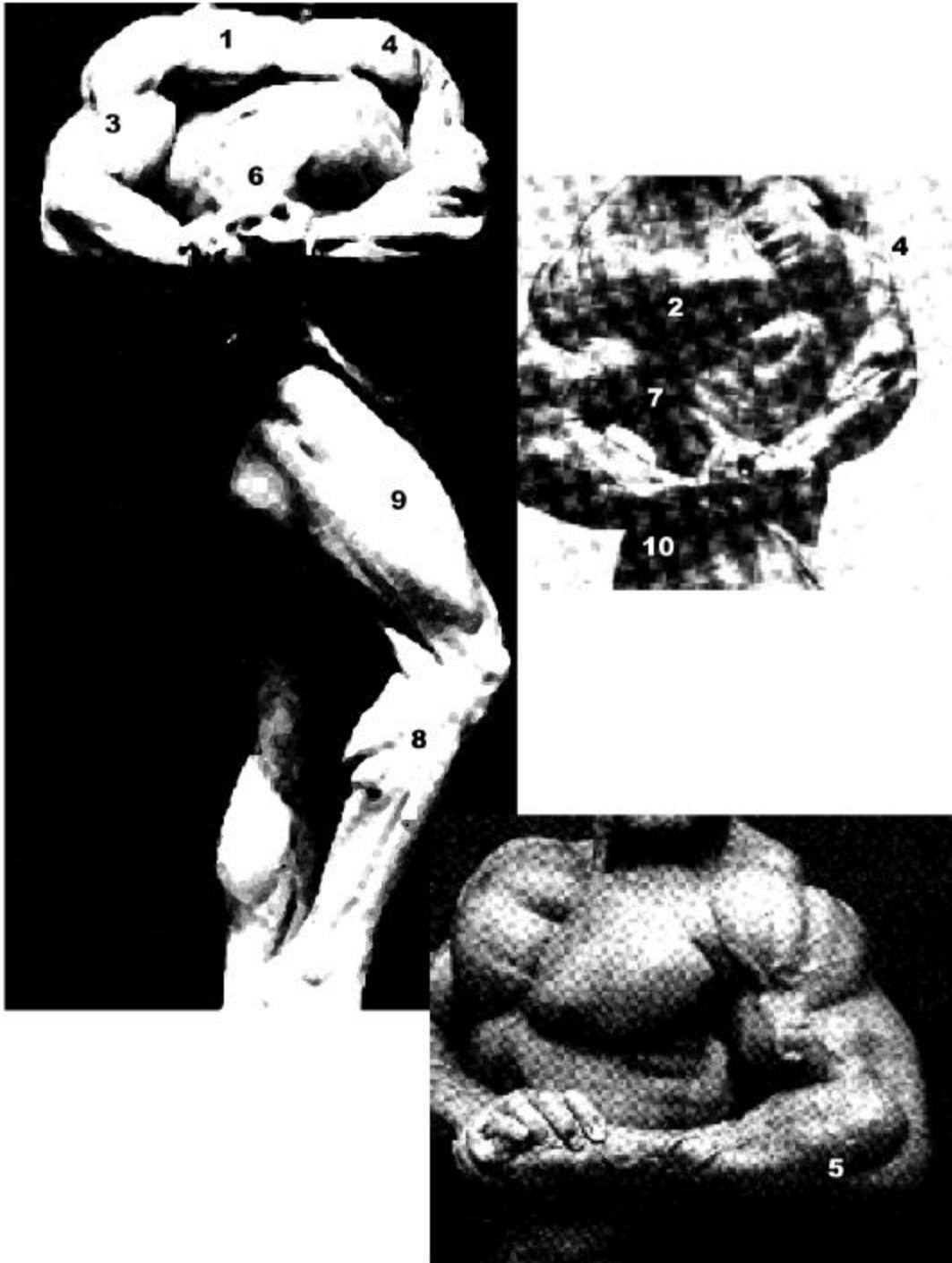
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Side Chest (see next page for diagrams)

1. A bodybuilder with thick pectoral development and a large rib cage should consider elevating the chest high, with the posterior forearm tucked under the rib cage.
2. A bodybuilder with average pectoral thickness, and/or a medium to small rib cage, should consider twisting the torso toward the judges slightly; this will make the upper body appear thicker and denser while the muscularity in the pectorals over shadows the fact that the rib cage is shallow.
3. The arm facing the judges should be held flat against the side to visually increase its size; contract both the biceps and triceps; make certain the deltoid is held in a neutral position (neither pulled to the front or back) to maximize its visual size.
4. Press the opposite upper arm against its corresponding pectoral in order to push that deltoid and pectoral forward and to the front -- this produces muscularity and separation and gives a thicker appearance to the pose.
5. If there is a large gap between the biceps and elbow (short muscle belly), consider pronating the hand and drawing the elbow back an inch or two; this position decreases the gap considerably.
6. A bodybuilder with poor abdominal development should consider drawing the stomach in a vacuum to accentuate a small waist and big chest.
7. A bodybuilder with superior abdominal development should consider rotating and tilting the torso down slightly to accentuate the abdominals; don't forget to draw in the abs before flexing to avoid a bloated gut look (see Standing Relaxed).
8. Lift the leg facing the judges by plantar flexing the foot; position the toes of the flexed foot in line with the arch of the opposite foot
9. Press the leg facing the judges tightly against the other leg to increase it's visual size; rest most of the body weight on the outer leg to increase muscle separation and muscularity; if the bodybuilder has weak hamstrings, they should rotate the leg slightly toward the judges to hide it and to show more quadriceps; if they have average to superior hamstring development, they should maintain a full side view; .
10. A long waisted bodybuilder should cock his/her hip up slightly to decrease the visual length of the midsection.

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Back Double Biceps (see next page for diagrams)

1. Keep the chest held high and the lats wide; do not tilt the torso back too much since this compresses and cause wrinkles in the low back.
2. Do not squeeze the shoulder blades together; doing so does not improve muscularity and thickness and makes the back appear narrower;
3. Turning your head to the side contracts the trapezius, making them more visible -- doing so is not suggested if the bodybuilder has dominant trap development, thereby overpowering the remainder of the back's musculature.
4. The arms should remain horizontal, or with the elbows lifted up slightly to provide a pleasing and aesthetic appearance.
5. Tilt the forearms back slightly to accentuate deltoid development and to allow the judges seated below to see the biceps' peak (be careful not to over-exaggerate this position).
6. Keep the abdominals tight to bring out the muscularity of the low back.
7. To narrow the hip structure, and to show hamstring muscularity, contract the gluteus and hamstrings.
8. Extend and flex one calf back; the judges may penalize a bodybuilder for failure to do so; women bodybuilders sometimes perform a more aesthetic variation of leg stance with the flexed leg extended far out to the side as if preparing to perform a side lunge exercise.

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Back Lat Spread (Men Only – see next page for diagrams)

If the bodybuilder is having difficulty executing this pose, begin the sequence as described in the Front Lat Spread.

1. Keep the chest held high with shoulders wide and square.
2. Spread lats wide and rounded forward ever so slightly; over rounding the lats can actually make the back appear narrower.
3. Similar to the front lat spread, tuck the fists into the sides of the waist; draw the hands in from the back of the waist (posterior obliques), then pull forward to make the waist appear smaller and the back wider; the knuckles and fingers should not be visible in this pose.
4. Draw the stomach in a vacuum to lift the ribcage up to diminish the size of the waist and maximize the size of the back.
5. To narrow the hip structure and to show hamstring muscularity, contract the gluteus and hamstrings.
6. Extend and flex one calf back; the judges may penalize the bodybuilder for failure to do so; women bodybuilders who add this pose to their free posing routine sometimes perform a more aesthetic variation of leg stance with the flexed leg extended far out to the side as if preparing to perform a side lunge exercise.

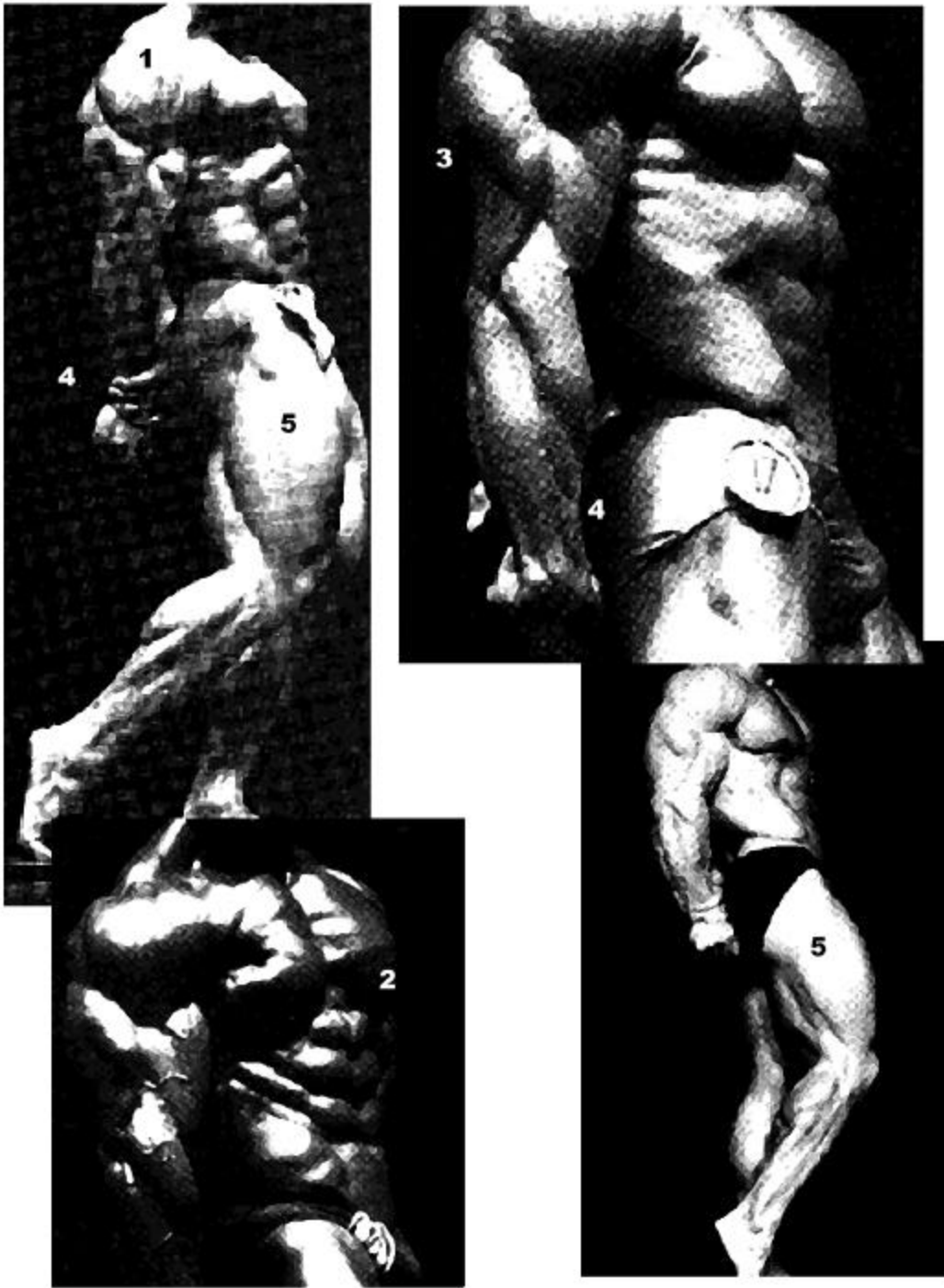
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Side Triceps (see next page for diagrams)

1. Maintain an erect position; do not exaggerate chest elevation.
2. A bodybuilder with superior abdominal and/or pectoral muscularity and definition should consider rotating the torso slightly toward the judges in order to flex the abdominals, pectoral and deltoid furthest away from the judges.
3. Press the outside arm against the side of the torso to increase its visual size and separation; do not rotate the arm to show nothing but triceps as this makes the arm appear small (less width) -- the biceps should also be visible.
4. The hand of the opposite arm can either grasp the wrist of the flexed arm, or the fingers can interlock -- each version positions the arm in a different manner for a different effect.
5. Position the legs in a stride as if walking; either leg can be forward or back; if so desired, the bodybuilder can maintain the same leg stance as in the side chest pose (see bottom right diagram).

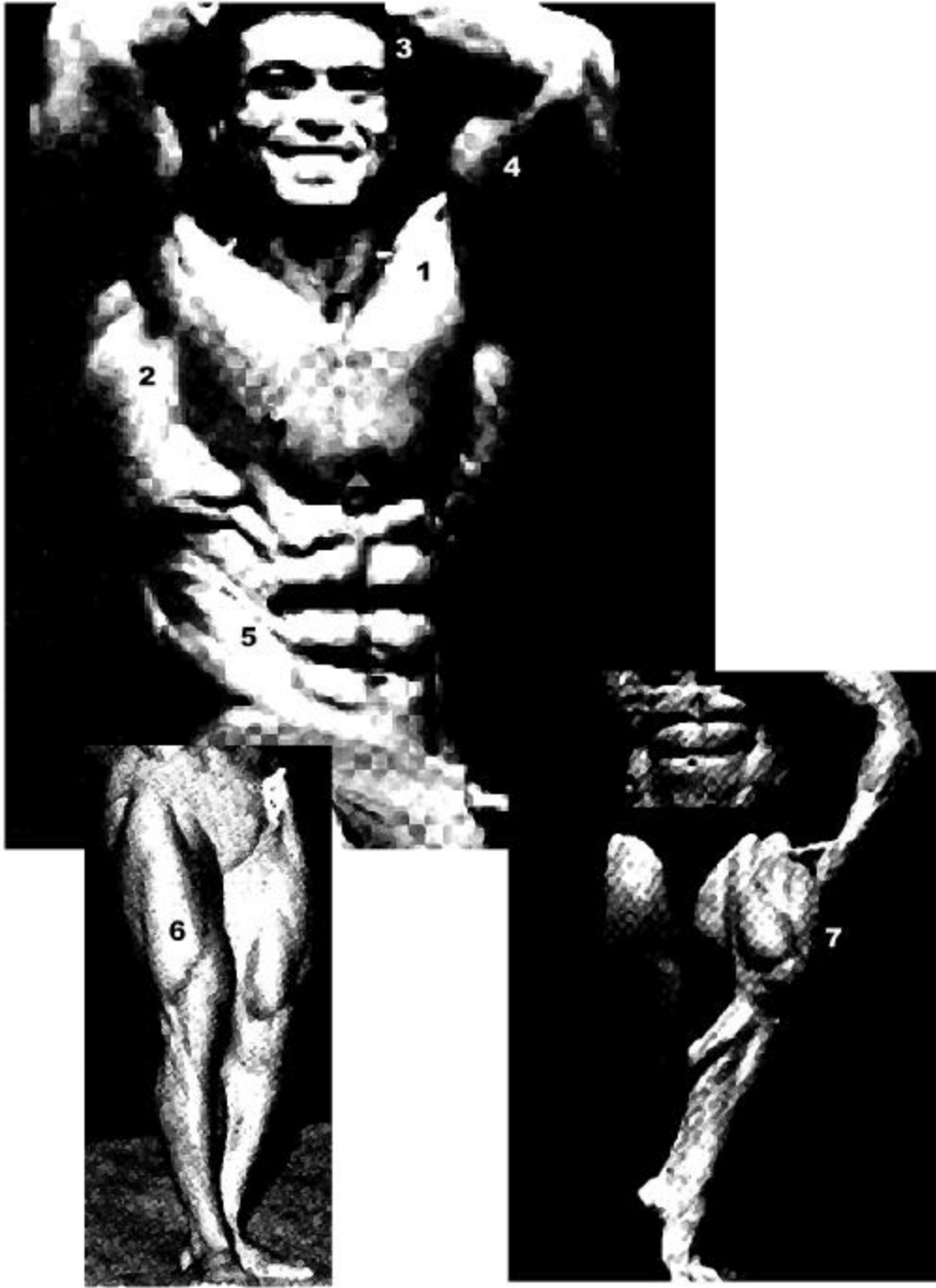
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Abdominal and Thigh (see next page for diagrams)

1. Hold the chest stationary, not lifted.
2. Spread the lats wide and rounded forward slightly -- this will provide sweep to the lats and outer pectoral line.
3. Keep the hands behind the head or neck.
4. Flex the arms with the biceps along the side of the head.
5. Let out 50-75% of your air, suck in slightly, then flex the abs; at this point let out a small cough -- this will contract the abs an additional 5%; dropping the chest and lats too much while using this technique makes the torso look smaller and narrower.
6. Extend and flex one leg; do not over flex the opposite leg -- this procedure provides a superior contrast between relaxed and flexed muscles; keep the knee of the extended leg slightly bent as this shows more quad separation than locking out the knee completely -- with the inexperienced poser this may not appear so, but with practice there is a visual difference.
7. Another option is to rotate the extended leg on the outer edge of the ball of the foot resting on the floor; this version shows more calf and inner thigh development; a bodybuilder with weak calves should not use this version (see bottom right diagram).

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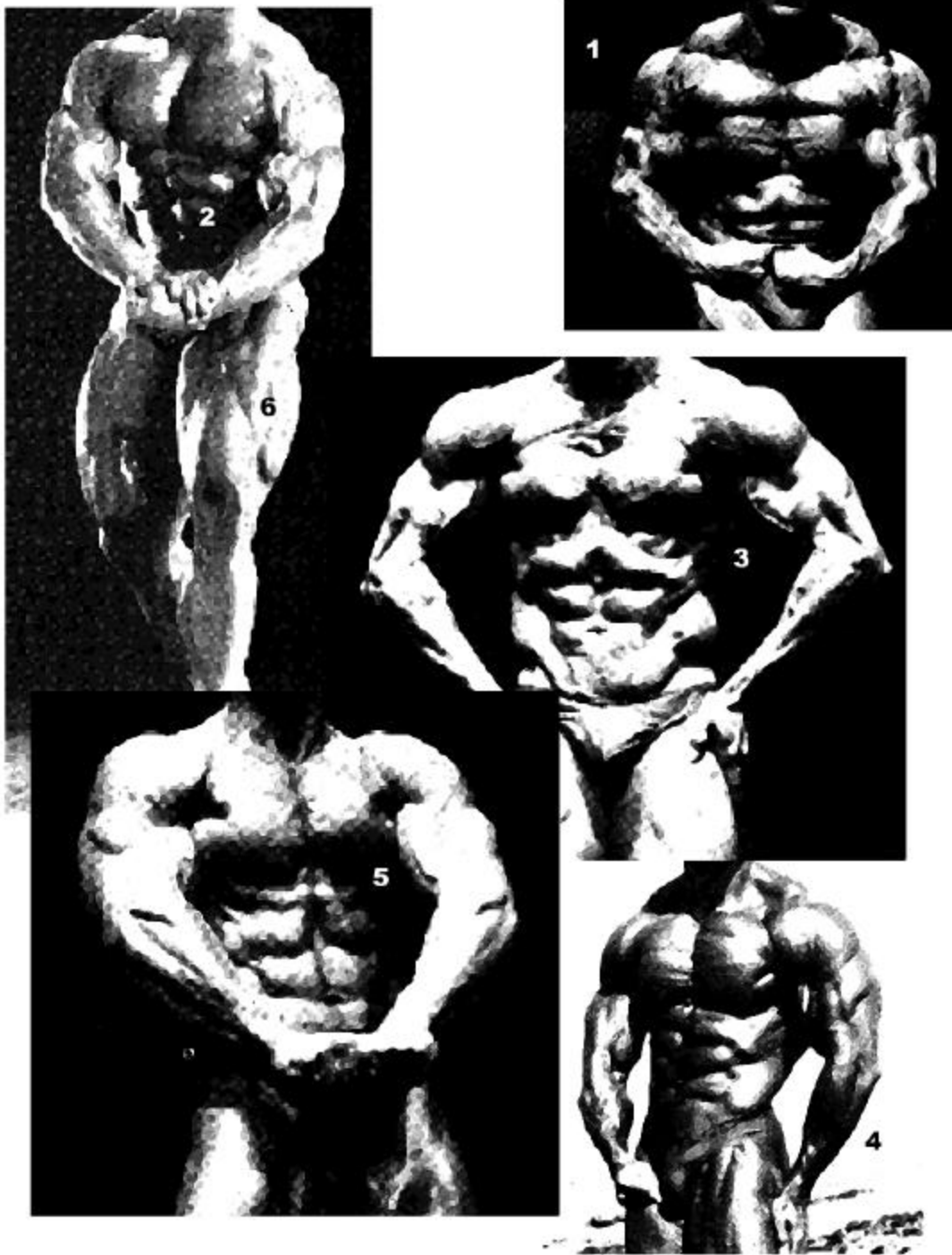


Most Muscular (judges discretion – generally men only – see next page for diagrams)

During the evening show, top competitors in each weight category (and those vying for the overall title) may also be requested to perform this eighth compulsory pose.

1. Version 1 is the standard, with the trapezius rounded and arms in front of the body in the vicinity of the upper or lower waist area.
2. Version 2 requires a bodybuilder to clasp one hand over the opposite wrist for a slightly different look.
3. Version 3 requires the bodybuilder to place his/her hands on the hips, squeezing the pectorals, deltoids, arms and abdominals; it is best suited for bodybuilders without a great deal of mass as it provides a more aesthetic look.
4. Version 4 is a combination of versions 1 and 3, displaying aesthetics and muscle.
5. Version 5 shows an example of a unique and personalized 'most muscular'
6. Regardless of the version incorporated, the bodybuilder can extend one leg out to show the muscularity and separation, but is only recommended if he/she has adequate quadriceps development

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Finals (round II, p.m.)

The finals at night may only include the top 3-10 individuals from each weight category. The exact number alters according to the level and number of competitors. A small local show usually includes all competitors in the finals. Medium sized regional shows often limit the number to the top 3-5 in each weight category. Upper level competitions may even limit the finals to the top 3 in each weight category.

Free posing

The finals emphasize the free posing round. Repetition of this round is primarily for audience entertainment. But it could make a difference in ranking if two competitors are close, or a tie occurred during pre-judging.

Compulsory poses

After free-posing, the judges call each weight category individually back on stage. The top five contestants will then perform the compulsory poses as they did during the pre-judging (7 for men, 5 for women).

Although it is true that the judges make most decisions during the pre-judging, decisions can reverse if a close runner-up comes in 'sharper' at night while the expected winner shows up in worse condition.

Posedown

After observing the comparisons with the top 3-5 competitors of a specific weight category, the competitors perform a 60 second posedown to pre-selected music. This round is primarily for audience entertainment and allows the Statistician time to calculate and present the placings to the Master of Ceremonies.

Improvising on stage may look awkward, clumsy and confusing. Competitors should create and practice a separate mini-posing routine especially for the posedown. It should consist of his/her best 6-10 poses with the sequence repeated 2-3 times depending on the number of poses used, and the length of time each is held. The best two poses should be kept last for impact. Some improvisation, however, may have to occur at times. For example, if a fellow competitor hits a front double biceps, and it is next in your repertoire, be prepared to strike a different pose if you don't feel confident in the comparison.

On the basis of the bodybuilder's style of psychological warfare, either move next to the other competitors to show you are not intimidated, or stand to the side to show superiority since they must approach you for comparison purposes. Either method can work if the situation is right.

Weight class winner announced

If a competitor is fortunate enough to win a weight category, that person will then proceed to the final comparisons and posedown.

Compulsory poses, phase II

When requested, the winner from each weight category proceeds on stage and performs the compulsory poses (7 for men, and 5 for women) with the other weight class winners. This allows the judges to observe the top competitors of each weight category side by side for the first time.

Pose down, phase II

After the compulsory poses, contestants proceed through a final posedown for 60 seconds.

Overall winner announced

After the final posedown, the MC announces the overall winner.

- In all rounds, the judges score the competitors according to the placement system (the top competitor receives 1 point, the second best 2 points, etc.). The competitor with the least amount of points at the end of the day wins.
- During the scoring of Round I, judges eliminate the highest and lowest scores before calculating the totals.

Procedures for couples competition

Couples competition consists of two rounds, plus the finals. The judges assess each couple as an entity, paying special attention to physiques that match (e.g., are both physiques heavily muscled or lean). During the rounds, judges also look for harmonized and synchronized movements (e.g., limb movements), similar style poses, and accuracy of achieving identical lines.

Pre-judging (a.m.)

Round 1A, preliminary assessment

Similar to individual competition, the head judge will have the couples perform front and back 'standing relaxed' poses. The judges compare the physiques of the man and woman separately in order to determine the order of ranking. The score can then be adjusted up or down according to their assessment of the couple as a whole. For example:

Couple	Male	Female	Sub-Total	Total	Placing
1	2	3	5	5	3
2	3	1	4+1	5	2
3	1	3	4-1	3	1

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Round 1B, free posing

Each couple, in numerical order, performs a maximum 2 minute posing routine to the music of their choice. The routine can have elements of dance and gymnastics, but should also include bodybuilding poses with intermittent pauses to display the muscular development of their physiques. Judges look for a muscular display, artistic presentation and smooth choreography. As with Round 1A, judges assess the couple as an entity, the manner in which their physiques match and compliment each other, and how they move in unison.

Round 1C, compulsory poses

The head judge calls each couple in turn onto the stage, then has them perform the five compulsory poses:

1. Front double biceps pose
2. Side chest pose
3. Back double biceps pose
4. Side triceps pose
5. Abdominal and thigh pose

After all the couples have performed the compulsory poses, the head judge has all couples line up at the rear of the stage in preparation for the comparisons.

Only two couples at a time step forward in the order of woman 1, man 1, woman 2, man 2, to again perform the five compulsories simultaneously.

The judges assess each woman's and man's physique in the same manner as in individual competition outlined previously. In addition, judges assess each couple on how their physiques match, harmonize and compliment each another. For example, a tall ectomorphic man should not team up with an endomorphic woman, or a tall mesomorphic woman with a short endomorphic man.

Finals (p.m.)

Only the top five couples proceed to the evening finals.

After each couple performs a free posing routine will everyone be called on stage. At this point, the head judge instructs the finalists to perform the five compulsory poses, moving from one couple to the next non-stop. The judges assess each couple as an entity as per instructions described in Rounds 1A and 1B.

- As with the individual contests, the judges place each couple in order of highest to lowest, with 1st placing being the best. The statistician eliminates the two highest and lowest scores from the judges' score sheets. The remaining scores are then added for a final total. The couple with the lowest total wins.

The Confident and Non-Confident Poser

Without adequate practice, stage nervousness can accentuate poor posing ability. If a competitor know the poses and routine intimately, there is less chance of mistakes. And, with experience, there is better probability that the competitor will become more versatile and professional. The table below lists some of the characteristics of a confident and non-confident poser, some of which apply to the compulsory poses, while others during the free posing round.

Confident Poser	Non-Confident Poser
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive use of stage space. • Spontaneous gestures. • Direct eye contact with the judges, audience and other competitors. • Good body response to the selection of music during the free posing round. • The body moves in smooth transitions. • Facial expressions change smoothly with body transitions. • The body looks flexible and natural, even when the muscles contract in a static position. • S/he appears comfortable as if requiring little effort to pose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of small stage area. • Holding arms and legs close together. • Performance of several 'most muscular' poses, without expressing him/her self with more original poses. • Eyes make contact with the floor, straight ahead or off stage during posing. • S/he maintains one basic facial expression throughout. • There is relatively no shift in the pelvis or torso -- everything moves in one block. • There is a tendency to maintain a vertical position rather than using a variety of stances, such as kneeling or lunging.

Posing tips

- Whenever possible, watch professional or top amateur bodybuilding contests while critiquing the compulsory poses and posing routines. Look for any flaws, then imagine how the competitors could improve each pose, or transition between poses.
- Take shallow breaths during the transitions of both the compulsory and free posing rounds to keep your stomach from heaving in and out.
- Always maintain flexed abdominals. Relaxing the abs during free posing or compulsory rounds can often make you appear to have a thick, rounded gut. This is especially important while turning or performing 3/4 twisting poses. Furthermore, maintain a semi-flexed body during posing transitions; never totally relax the body.
- Competitors with a thick waist should avoid frontal plane posing during free posing, using side and twisted poses to augment the illusion of sleekness through the waistline.
- When posing, do not contract the muscles to the maximum as this can create shakiness. Flex the muscles with 90% effort since there is very little visual difference between contracting as hard as one can, and contracting almost as hard as one can (an exception being the Most Muscular pose). This saved effort enables the competitor to hold poses longer, still allow one to smile every now and again, and look more natural.
- When viewed from the front, don't forget to flex the calves since this can increase their width considerably.
- A bodybuilder should not perform the most-muscular pose unless s/he has a large, well-developed upper body. Better developed contestants (if there are any) will definitely add it to their routine. Use a variation such as hands on the hips most-muscular to show a more aesthetic variation of the pose.
- Have the routine videotaped to allow critical (but helpful) friends to evaluate and adjust the routine accordingly before the competition.

Tanning

Having dark skin is a necessity for bodybuilding competition. The darker the skin, the more visible the definition, separation and muscle highlights. Under bright stage lights, light to medium skin will look washed-out, and many of the bodybuilder's hard-earned cuts disappear. Even Black bodybuilders sometimes need to darken up their skin to avoid a washed-out look. Tanning before 10:00 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m. is best, when the sun's rays slant through the earth's atmosphere.

Dangers

1. Excessive exposure to sunlight can cause hundreds of tiny cancers on the skin that must be surgically removed with skin grafted from other parts of the body.
2. Sunlight causes premature aging and loss of skin elasticity, especially in the face around the eyes and mouth.
3. Overexposure can damage the body's immune system, impairing a person's defense against injury or disease (making recovery from training a slower process).
4. Overexposure may cause swelling and leakage of tiny blood vessels under the skin (sun burn).
5. Overexposure may cause distortion, discoloration, cloudiness and possible cataracts in the eyes.
6. Long exposure to the sun can result in heat exhaustion or heat stroke; drink water while tanning, even if you don't feel thirsty, since thirst is not an accurate indication of the body's need for fluids.

The first important step to tanning is choosing the correct sun screen. This has become even more critical considering the dissipation of the ozone layer. Sunscreen companies rate their products in accordance to the sun protective factor (SPF) -- the higher the rating, the better the protection. Use sunscreens with a protective factor of 18 or more on sensitive areas, such as the nose. If remaining outside for most of the day, use a protective factor of at least 10.

If allergic to sunscreens containing PABA, look for those that contain pedimate 0, benzyophenone (oxybensone, dioxybenzone), homosalate or methoxycinnate as a protective agent. With the advancements of science, there may be many more protective agent additives that are new to the industry at the time of this manual's publication.

Choosing a sunscreen

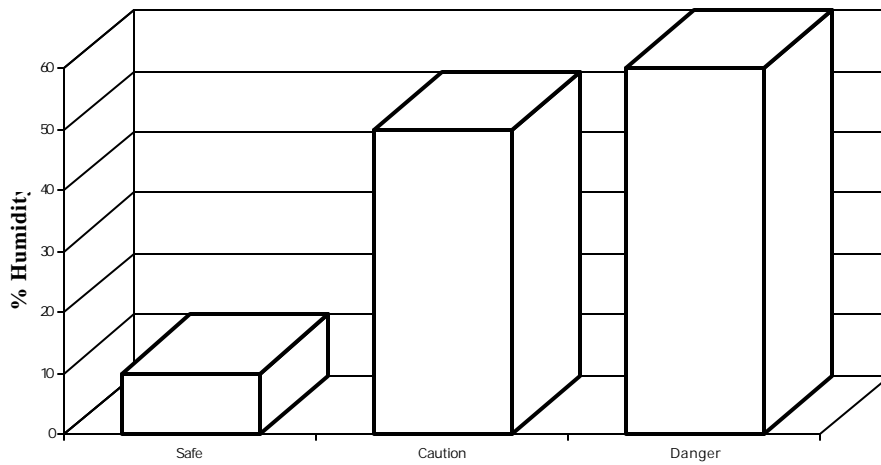
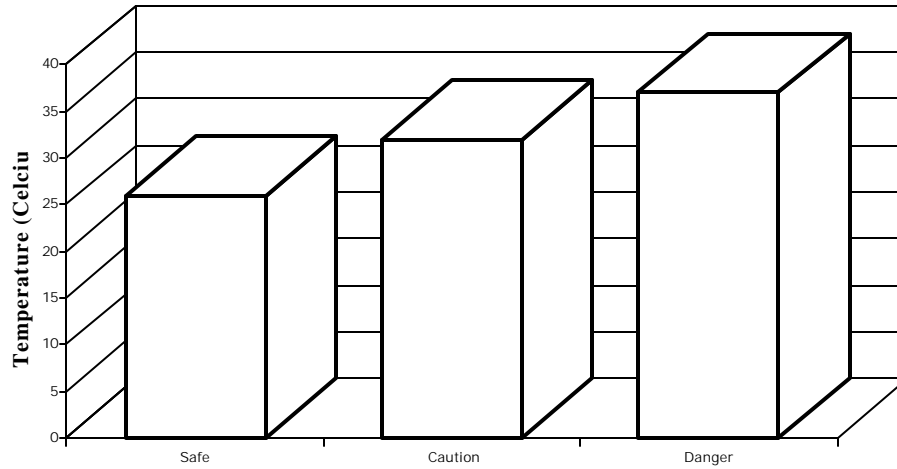
Skin Type	Example	Best SPF
I	Never tans; red heads, fair people.	10-15
II	Burns easily, tans lightly; blue eyed, fair skinned.	6-12
III	Burns sparingly, tans easily; average Caucasian	4-6
IV	Burns little, tans quickly; olive skinned Caucasians	2-6
V	Rarely burns, tans well; brown skinned people.	0-2
VI	Never burns, tans dark; black skinned people.	0-2

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Safe to dangerous tanning conditions

Listen to the daily weather forecast for UV index ratings:

- 0-39 = 1 hour+ before burning
- 4-6.9 = 30 minutes or less before burning
- 7-9 = 20 minutes or less before burning
- 9+ = 15 minutes or less before burning



Tanning tips

- Start off with 15 minutes each side, gradually increasing the time over the first 2-3 weeks -- do not attempt one hour sessions right away since doing so will definitely result in burning, peeling skin.
- Apply the sunscreen liberally about 45 minutes to an hour before tanning so the active ingredients have time for absorption.
- Always wear a sunscreen when swimming since ultraviolet rays travel through water.
- On cloudy days it is still possible to get 60-80% of the ultraviolet rays -- this is especially true at higher elevations where the atmosphere is thinner and fewer harmful ultraviolet rays filter out.
- It will take at least six weeks of continuous tanning before you can safely obtain a dark, rich skin color.
- It is important to lie at various angles in order to tan the sides of your legs, under your arms, and any other areas that are clearly visible on the posing platform.
- Use a cream (e.g., Nivea) in the morning, after your shower, and at night to keep the skin smooth and supple.
- For the last 8-10 days prior to the contest, only wash the 'necessary' body parts with soap -- lye found in many soaps can bleach tanned skin.
- Do not shower or bath for at least 3 hours after tanning as the hot water and soap can fade the darkening process
- Avoid long periods of time in the sun if you suffer from heart trouble, hyperthyroidism or high blood pressure.
- To help darken slightly burned skin, apply a mixture of diluted vinegar and water to the affected areas.
- If suffering from a sun burn, try these home remedies:
 - a) apply talcum powder over the sore spots,
 - b) soak in a tub of cool water and after the bath apply wet towels to the sore areas, re-wetting them once they are warm,
 - c) apply a paste of baking soda and water to the sore areas.

Tanning Beds

Tanning beds are a safe alternative to the sun since they provide a pre-determined amount of ultraviolet rays, and for a specific length of time. These beds give off U.V.A. (oxidizing ultraviolet light) and U.V.B. (melanin stimulating ultraviolet light) rays. Since the sun also gives off the more dangerous U.V.C. (short range ultra violet) rays, tanning beds are generally safer to use.

Before starting tanning sessions, make certain the bed gives off Beta radiation rather than the more harmful Alpha radiation. Most tanning parlors recommend two visits the first week and 1 visit per week thereafter. The number of tanning sessions per week can increase, but be careful of burning.

Tanning Dyes and Lotions

A good alternative to those who do not wish to tan are dyes, spray-ons and lotions. Most bodybuilders use dyes or spray-ons only during the last week before competition since they simply stain the skin, and usually wash off completely after 5-7 days. They can make a dramatic difference in appearance since a few bottles produce a dark, rich skin appearance. Apply a coat every day after your shower, beginning 4-5 days from the contest. After minimal showering, allow the body to air dry if possible since friction from a towel can take away some of the color. Apply the last coat at least 3 hours before applying any posing oil. If applying oil directly after the last coat of dye, it may cause running or streaking to occur. Some of the better dyes are Pro Tan, Dye-O-Derm, and Coppertone's Sudden Tan. Quality spray-ons include Cory Everson's Fast Tan and Andreas Cahling's TanNow (highly recommended 1-800-458-7848).

Lotions are longer lasting, but require several coats to equal only one coat of dye. You can use lotions for year round coloring, and to act as a base color prior to applying dyes. Mary Kay, Avon, and Amway carry sunless tanning lotion. Depending on your current skin darkness, they may make you appear more orange than brown.

Tanning Pills

There are tanning pills available that allow you to obtain darker skin without exposing yourself to the sun or tanning beds (although they work much better in conjunction with ultraviolet light). One of the better sellers over the years has been Canthaxanthin, a carotenoid that stores in the fatty layer below the skin. This drug should not exceed 120 mg daily (with meals) for three weeks. Begin with one tablet a day and work up to the required dosage to avoid gastrointestinal upset. After three weeks, cut down to two tablets (approx. 60mg) a day to retain the color. Those with fair hair or light skin may turn an unpleasant orange color as it is red in color under the skin. This is especially noticeable on the knuckles, knees, palms and the soles of the feet. Since tanning pills have been proven to be toxic to the liver, they are not recommended. If interested, seek the advice of a physician before starting.

Posing attire

A bodybuilder must choose trunks or bikinis in accordance to his/her body type and skin color. Never buy a specific color or cut simply because another competitor looks good in them, or the color appears attractive. Here are some buying/designing tips*:

- Those with a long torso should wear high waist cut trunks. Those with a short torso should wear low waist cut trunks. The cut can help to visually alter the upper body length for better proportions.
- Those with long legs should wear low leg cut trunks. Those with short legs should wear high leg cut trunks. The cut can help to visually alter the lower body length for better proportions.
- Black and other dark colors can make the hips look smaller, and accentuate the width of the shoulders and sweep of the thighs.
- Those with pale skin should do not wear white or light colors since this accentuates the paleness, making the skin appear washed-out. Light skinned people look best in medium to dark greens, blues or reds.
- Dark skinned people look best in bright reds, yellows, blues, orange or cream.
- Very dark skinned people can wear medium to medium bright colors, but should stay away from white and really bright shades since there is too much contrast between the suit's color and skin color; this contrast appears to cut the physique in half rather than compliment it.
- Those with blond hair should consider pink, turquoise or green.
- Those with dark hair should consider red, white, fuchsia or royal blue.
- NOTE: judges do not allow multi-colored suits due to their distracting qualities.
- Quality suits are available through Andreas Cahling at 1-800-458-7848.

*Depending on hair, skin color or structure, more than one suggestion may apply.

General Guidelines

Women competitors must wear a solid, non-distracting color bikini. They must be clean and decent (no G-strings). The fastenings of the bikini must be plain with no attached ornamentation. Judges do not allow metallic materials, such as gold or silver. Men's trunks must also be a solid, non-distracting color, clean and decent (no G-strings). Judges do not allow metallic materials.

Once provided a contestant tag with a number, clip it on the left side of the posing trunks.

Contest accessories

Competitors should always be prepared by bringing the following items:

- Gym bag.
- Two posing suits; one for the pre-judging and one for the evening show since posing oil will often stain the suit's material, making the morning suit unusable.
- One or more warm-up suits.
- One or more towels to wipe off excess sweat or oil.
- Professional posing oil; if using cooking oil, almond and avocado work best; some people prefer using Pam since it is easy to apply; do not use baby oil since it absorbs too much light, making the body appear shiny and washed out rather than having a sheen.
- Tanning make-up and sponge applicators.
- At least 2 cassettes with the selected posing music, cued on both sides; the backup is necessary in case the original gets damaged.
- Personal grooming kit (hairbrush, mirror, razor, make-up, etc.).
- Enough low sodium, high carbohydrate food to sustain a condition of full muscles with sufficient energy throughout the day and night.
- A bottle of distilled water.
- Potassium (and perhaps sodium) supplements to control possible cramping from low mineral and water levels. Consider a sports drink with added electrolytes, but low in sodium.
- A pair of sandals or slip-on shoes in case the back stage area is dirty or unsanitary.
- Springs, rubber cables, etc., to use for pumping up in case the promoter did not supply equipment, or if all the pumping equipment is in use.

Pre-contest journal

Often a pre-contest journal is in paragraph or written form. Although it may include training and dietary data, this journal's primary purpose is to provide feedback information relating specifically to the athlete's contest preparation. This is particularly true of bodybuilders as they become concerned with numerous topics and their effects, such as:

- Tanning or make-up application
- Aerobic conditioning and training
- Detailed psychological approaches, feelings, thoughts
- Amount of time spent on posing practice
- Learning experiences before, during and after the competition
- Experiences concerning carbohydrate loading, sodium loading or water depletion
- Points of failure and how to overcome them next time
- Before and after photographs
- Physiological reactions regarding altered training and dieting techniques

Make the pre-competition journal as complete as possible for future competition reference. The only way to improve from one contest to another is to learn from past successes and failures.

Contest pumping

Whether pumping up for a contest back stage, or for physique photographs, it is imperative that the competitor does it properly, or the results could be devastating. Here are some helpful tips:

- Pumping too much results in the loss of definition and separation in the muscle(s) due to excessive blood engorgement.
- An excessively pumped muscle results in poorer controlled flexing and mobility.
- Over pumping causes breathlessness and shakiness.
- Flexing on stage also pumps the muscles, so a lot of pumping backstage is unnecessary.
- Over pumping back stage causes slow shrinkage on stage before the judges' eyes as the pump subsides.
- Only start pumping 5-10 minutes before going on stage starting too early will result in a pump loss that much sooner.
- Lightly pump the weak areas so they are up to par with the strong areas.
- Mildly pump the muscles to create a flush -- just enough to make the muscles rounder and show better.
- The deltoids are the only muscles that can be pumped to near maximum without losing much of their definition or separation.
- Never pump the thighs since they lose too much definition and separation in as little as two sets. It is best to do one set of deep knee bends (20 reps), and some stretching just to loosen up the quads and get the blood flowing.
- Between pumping sets stretch all muscle groups to increase flexibility, blood flow and relaxation.
- Competitors must pace their pumping; rushing the process, or being anxious reduces the quality of the pump.
- Experiment with 250-500mg of vitamin B (Niacin) 20-30 minutes before pumping; this vitamin can cause the skin to glow and increase vascularity in some people; over experimentation can result in lack of effect, so try this out sparingly.
- It is vital that the competitor remain relaxed; anxiety requires higher oxygen consumption, resulting in less oxygen to supply a lasting pump to the muscles.

Physique photography

Competition is a perfect time to take pictures for future inspiration and comparison, either at home or on the contest stage. The following are some tips for having quality photographs taken:

- Overcast days are best for color outdoor pictures.
- Never shoot with a lens shorter than 50mm lens (90-135mm is best); a wide angle lens creates more distortion by introducing curvature into the picture.
- Use cameras that focus; an automatic camera may not give the proper lighting effect, and they require a flash indoors (this can wash away any highlights, shadows and separation).
- Use a shutter speed of at least 1/125th of a second or faster to reduce blurring from hand shakiness.
- Use a lens aperture between f4 and f16 (an optimum setting is between f5 and f8).
- The shutter speed and apertures suggested above are not cut into stone -- use an exposure that is correct for the existing light conditions so as not to under expose the film; the settings can greatly differentiate depending on the light source and where the photographer takes the pictures (e.g., outside, auditorium or gym); it is advisable to purchase a camera book or manual that emphasizes taking pictures in 'existing light' conditions.
- Color 400 film or higher is best for existing light contest photography (no flash).
- Aim the camera at the bodybuilder's waist level to prevent distortion of the subject's physique; aiming the camera up or down can give the illusion of a long waist and short legs, or a short waist and long legs.
- Use a background that is non-distracting, such as trees, shrubbery or buildings; backgrounds such as boulders, sky, the beach, or a solid color backdrop are best.
- Take outdoor photos between 9 and 10 a.m. or 3 and 4 p.m., when the sun is close to a 45-degree angle to the earth's surface; other times of the day, when the sun is higher, creates distortion, resulting in deep shadows across the body.

Travel

Sooner or later most competitive bodybuilders will have to travel to another city, state or country in order to compete for a top title. Traveling into another time zone or country can often throw a competitor off his peak if he does not follow some basic guidelines:

- The body needs one day to adjust for each time zone; if possible, arrive early for the competition and allow adequate time to relax and for the system to conform to the time difference.
- If traveling east, expect to retire late due to the earlier darkness.
- If traveling west, expect to retire early due to the later darkness.
- For the final 3-5 weeks, gradually reschedule meals, rests, sleeping patterns and workouts in accordance to the new time zone; this adjustment is necessary so that the biological clock stays in tune for peaking, pumping and mental alertness at the time of the contest.
- When in a different time zone, and sleeping becomes difficult, eat a high carb meal (simple sugars) towards bedtime; high carb meals release serotonin in the body -- this chemical raises the blood sugar, then drops it quickly, thus providing a drowsy effect.
- If traveling by car, arrive at the contest one hour ahead of contest time for every hour traveled; this will provide the body with needed rest and relaxation.
- If traveling by plane, drink some distilled water upon landing since air pressure dehydrates the body.
- Alcohol increases the effects of time zone differentials (jet lag).
- Avoid raw fruits (unless they have a heavy peel), raw vegetables, and salads in foreign countries since restaurants wash these foods with the same water that can make people ill; also avoid unpasteurized milk products.
- Only eat fish that is fresh within two hours of being caught, unless properly refrigerated.
- Avoid tap water and ice cubes; if drinking another country's water, boil it for 10 minutes first then add halizone tablets, or iodine for sterilization purposes; it is best to drink hot decaffeinated coffee and tea, imported bottled water or soft drinks low in sodium and sugar.
- Consult your physician about prescription drugs to help relaxation and to reduce air sickness while traveling by plane.
- Jet lag can result in digestive upsets, irritability, fatigue, increased susceptibility to illness or accidents, and slowness; expect any or all of these symptoms.
- It is advisable to bring a bottle of Pepto Bismol since this can help prevent traveler's diarrhea for up to three weeks.
- Activated charcoal helps to postpone traveler's diarrhea by stifling bacteria in the intestines.

- If suffering from diarrhea, eat bananas or take mineral supplements since diarrhea drains the body of potassium and magnesium.
- A diet of complex carbohydrates reduces symptoms of altitude sickness.
- In the US, you can call Worldwide Health Forecast at 1-800-368-3531; this information line dispenses news on any medical conditions around the world along with health tips and guides to foreign medical facilities.

Miscellaneous Competition Tips

The following is a self-test to evaluate current condition:

- If the skin is tight around the abdominals, low back and thighs (difficult to pinch), but conditions appears smooth, the body is retaining water.
- If the skin is very tight, but the muscles appear flat, considering increasing carbohydrate and water intake.
- If the skin pinches easily, and the physique appears smooth, the body is still carrying too much fat.

- A trick some bodybuilders use the day before the contest consists of performing one set to failure every waking hour for any weak body parts; this process can increase the muscle(s) size on contest day by up to a ½ inch or more due to inflammation; however, the severe soreness that follows may not be worth the increased size if unable to flex that particular muscle; as with any ‘off-the-wall’ suggestion, experiment with this technique before implementing.
- Relax and enjoy the experience of competing; stress and nervousness can retain subcutaneous water; it would be wise to practice meditation and deep relaxation techniques.
- A few months before contest, seek the services of allergy specialist who can perform a cytotoxic test (cyto = cell, toxic = capable of killing) to determine food allergies and sensitivities, that can often be a cause of water retention. Note that 90-95% of men and women are mildly allergic to refined sugars, milk, milk products, grains and rice.
- Apply a thin to moderate layer of posing oil in long strokes; don't plaster it on too thick since sweating on stage naturally increases the amount of shine and luster, making the body look greasy.

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- Style the hair short if possible; women can tie it back or put it in a bun; long shaggy hair covers the muscularity of the trapezius; thick, puffy hair distorts proportions by making the head look too big, and the shoulders narrow.
- Begin shaving body hair at least one month before contest to avoid blemishes on contest day; the best method is to use an electric razor since this procedure has less tendency to cause blemishes than using a safety razor; if the electric razor does not shave close enough, switch over to a safety razor two weeks before competition; don't experiment with hair removal systems the week of the contest.
- Often competitors look better the day after the contest due to all the intense posing and sweating that took place the day before; it may be worthwhile to spend at least 3-4 hours of posing the day before competition to help harden up the physique, and to take advantage of the 'day-after' look; it may be necessary to add extra carbs to the diet if much time is spent on posing, thereby utilizing glycogen stores.
- Sipping a glass of wine or two the night before can help to flush out some excess water since alcohol acts as a diuretic.
- Quick-paced, intense bodybuilding burns 500-700 calories per hour depending on the length of rests between sets; adjust the diet accordingly.
- Do not try fasting as a solution to quick weight loss; the proportion of muscle loss to fat loss is 60:40 while in a starvation mode.
- Get to the contest early to check the lighting set up, stage entrance, where the competitors are to stand, and where they exit; knowing this information means fewer things to worry about while competing.
- Control facial expressions; clenching the jaw or contorting the face looks amateurish.
- Don't get psyched out by observing other competitors; each bodybuilder needs to concentrate on his/her own strategy and let the others worry about themselves.
- Good Luck!