

The Johnston Rep Method Experiment

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The Johnston Rep Method is a system of training developed by Brian D. Johnston, President of the I.A.R.T. Without divulging every major detail that makes this method of training unique, JReps (as coined by Mr. Johnston) entail training a muscle in different 'zones' throughout an exercises full range-of-motion. This style of training takes into account the strong points and weak points of an exercise and helps one to train within and around these points (zones). The method is characterized by a high volume of muscle contractions with a low-volume of exercise, the result of which is greater muscle activation and a better pump.

Others who have been implementing JReps for as little as 2 weeks and upwards of 5-6 months have noted an increase in muscle development, changes in muscular "appearance", increased strength, less systemic fatigue following the workouts, prolonged muscle pumps and a feeling that the muscles are remaining full and tight for more days *after* the workout.

Intrigued by what I had heard regarding JReps I purchased Mr. Johnston's book and spoke with him personally about the method.

I have decided to implement the method exclusively for the next 5-6 months as I prepare for my Natural Bodybuilding competitions in June. To test the effectiveness of this method I will utilize JReps for every exercise in every workout from now until June.

Below I have provided 'before' photos of my biceps and triceps. I consider my arms to be my weakest body part and the one that would benefit most if in fact this method can help to accentuate a muscles shape and size.



* These photos were taken January 20, 'cold' (no pump) and without the use of special lighting to accentuate muscle definition. At this time I weigh 145 ½ lbs. at approximately 7-8% bodyfat. My right arm measures 14 ½ in. flexed and 12 ¼ in. relaxed.

It should be noted that although I am certified through the I.A.R.T. I am not (and never have been) employed by the I.A.R.T. nor do I get compensated for, or have a financial stake, in the sale of their books and materials. This undertaking is purely for my own interest, my clients and those who rely on Pure Physique for honest, unbiased, rational, and practical, training and nutrition information.

Because I will be losing bodyfat simultaneously with this experiment some may conclude that any change in the muscles appearance will solely be the result of lower BF. However I will be taking photos at this June's competition which can then be compared to the photos from last June's competition (these can be viewed in the [Gallery](#) and on the [Homepage](#) of this site) at which time I was approximately 3-4% BF.

Again, I will be implementing JReps for all muscle groups and so if the method is as effective as touted I should look at least *somewhat* different in the same condition (i.e. 3-4% BF).

I will report back and post updated pics here over the course of the coming weeks and months.

UPDATE – March 1, 2006

After 5 weeks utilizing the JReps Method I've made some interesting observations which I will go through in just a moment. But first let me update you on my overall condition. As mentioned previously I've been dieting down for bodybuilding competitions. Over the course of these five weeks my bodyweight has dropped to 143 lbs. (a loss of 2 ½ lbs.) and although I do not have an accurate measure of my BF% (currently using skin fold calipers) I estimate it around 6%. The skin fold measurement for my abdominal has decreased by 2 mm and the skin fold at the suprailliac (a.k.a. "love handles") has gone down 2 mm as well. They measure 6 mm and 4 mm respectively.

My arm measurements have not changed at all. Flexed, my right arm measures 14 ½ inches just as it did last time and 12 ¾ inches relaxed. Now there was a ½ inch increase in my arm measurement relaxed which would likely mean that I had not measured accurately the last time (i.e. I may have measured too low on

my arm compared this measurement). However, despite not having seen an increase in my arms measurement, my arms do appear to be slightly more defined and look harder (pictures on next page).

This improvement in definition can easily be attributed to a decrease in bodyfat, *but*, that would mean that although my arm measurements did not change, I actually did gain a little bit of muscle.

Photos from 1/20/06



Photos from 3/2/06



From these photo's it is clear that the triceps look fuller and sharp and the biceps—although not as dramatic—look somewhat sharper as well.

What has been most encouraging is that although my BF is not yet down to what it was for my previous competitions, most of my muscle groups are standing out just as much now as they did then. This leads me to believe that when I do get down around 3-4% I should look that much better.

The most significant difference that JReps have made thus far is that my muscles are holding their fullness longer. Meaning they are starting to flatten out 2-3 days after a workout.

In the past, especially when dieting and keeping my carbohydrate intake low, my muscles would lose their fullness and shape only days after training them.

Those who have ever adhered to a low-carb diet for an extended period understand exactly what I'm talking about.

Glycogen (converted from carbs) stored in a muscle is partly responsible for a muscle maintaining its size and fullness. The more glycogen stored in a muscle the more water which can be held in that muscle, thereby resulting in it being full. But once glycogen starts to leave the muscle so to does the muscles fullness. It seemingly loses its shape and size.

From this it could be hypothesized that JReps result in a muscle overcompensating in its storage of glycogen. This would also mean that JReps as a form of training depletes more glycogen from a muscle than is typical. This is an ideal scenario for bodybuilders or anyone who wants or needs to maintain a certain "look" for extended periods of time.

In regards to the workouts themselves, JReps leaves me with a much more gratifying feeling when finished than traditional High Intensity Training because of the unbelievable pump that accompanies the same high degree of local (muscular) fatigue. In fact just this week I decided to ease up a bit as I felt myself starting to get worn down from a combination of dieting, a heavy work schedule, increased aerobic exercise, Krav Maga (Israeli full contact combat and self-defense) training, and travel. Even performing my exercise short of failure, and in some cases with lesser loads, I still walked away from the workouts with an incredible pump and feeling like I sufficiently worked the muscles. Such has never been the case when I stopped short of failure or used lighter loads with a more traditional lifting style.

At this point I do not see myself returning a "normal" style of training unless to occasionally measure my results against past performances or for a break.

UPDATE – August 22nd 2006

After the competitions my BF went back up (as expected) and I gained some water weight back. I allowed about 2-3 weeks for it to stabilize and started tracking the results of my JReps training from then on (mid June).

After about 5 weeks I gained only 1-2 pounds but with no changes in skin fold measurements indicating that the weight gain was lean mass.

I then revamped my training schedule and started implementing new variations of JReps, variations that seem to suit my particular needs better than "the basic" JReps (halves, thirds) I had been doing for the first 6 ½ months. In 2 weeks time I've packed on 5 lbs. total with 2.5 to 3 being lean. This is the biggest jump in

muscle gain in the shortest amount of time that I've ever seen with any training method I've followed to date. The combination of a training method that better targets and stimulates the muscles while minimizing systemic fatigue and enabling faster recovery and a diet that has helped me remain in an anabolic state has proven very effective in adding new muscle.

My goal is to add another 8-10 lbs. of lean mass over the course of the next 12-16 months utilizing the JReps, Zone Training Method. My recent success with this method and my continually improving application of it leaves me quite confident that I will be able to meet this goal...but only time will tell. Below is a current picture (taken today) and statistics to use as comparison in the coming months.



*5' 6" tall, 152 lbs. with
12.6% Body-fat (taken using the BioAnalogics Body Composition Tester)
Total BF: 19.1 pounds, Lean- mass 132.8 pounds*

For more information on JReps, Zone Training visit
<http://www.zone-training.net>