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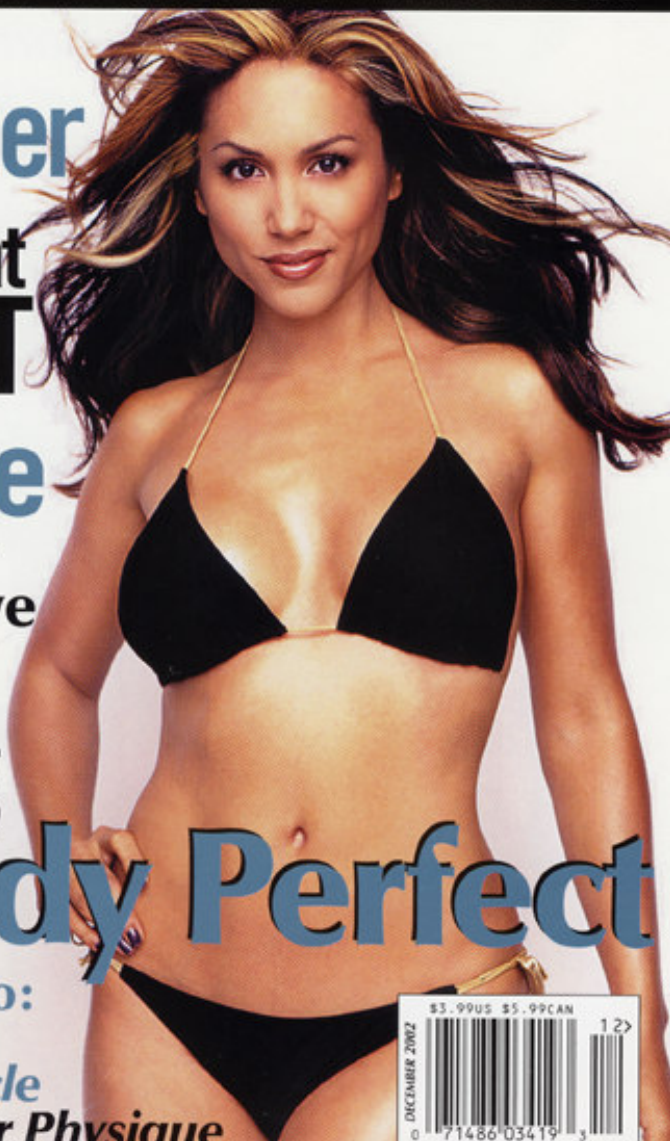
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Sculpting Her Body *Perfect*

By Brad Schoenfeld, CSCS

*Brad Schoenfeld, a Certified Personal Trainer, is a renowned expert on fitness and sports nutrition. He's the best selling author of *Look Great Naked* and *Sculpting Her Body Perfect*, and a regular contributor to magazines such as *Glamour*, *Self* and *Marie Claire*. He's been featured on TV's *CBS Evening News*, *CNN Headline News* and *Fox's Good Day New York*.*

Women's fitness has come a long way. In the not-too-distant past, it was considered taboo for a woman to lift weights. Common wisdom preached that weight training would "masculinize" the female physique, building a big, bulky body. Fortunately, advances in exercise science have debunked this myth and the majority of women now realize that weight training is the key to developing a shapely, feminine physique; you can't tone up without it.

Building Your "House"

But it's not enough to simply go to the gym and pump a little iron. To achieve your physique goals, you need a regimented body sculpting program. I like to use the analogy that you should approach body sculpting as if you were building a house. When a builder constructs a house, she first must lay down a foundation. The foundation is the basis upon which the house will rest, and without a solid foundation, the house will crumble. Next, the builder must

erect a frame. The frame is built on the foundation and will support the floors and walls of the house. After putting up the frame, the builder can put in the walls of the house, and the structure will begin to look complete. Finally, the minute details of the house can be added, such as marble tiles and mirrored walls, which give a finished look to the edifice. Further improvements can now be made on an ongoing basis, at the discretion of the builder.

Now let's apply the analogy to body sculpting. In the initial stages of training you first must develop a foundation of

muscle. You need this foundation to have a base upon which to work. It also increases the solidity of your connective tissue and the strength of your joints, which is necessary in the performance of more intense routines. Next, you can begin the body sculpting procedure by refining the muscle you have amassed. Your body will now start to take form and your lines and curves will be accentuated with pleasing shape and symmetry. Lastly, you can fine tune your physique by concentrating on details such as enhancing the shape of your upper chest, or firming

to your inner thigh. This is where body sculpting truly becomes an art!

The program that follows is based on my book, *Sculpting the Body Perfect: Human Kinetics*. The book, which includes 82 exercises to burn fat, tone muscle and shape your physique, details a three-phased system of training. A body conditioning phase, a toning and shaping phase, and a targeted body sculpting phase. All routines are designed to be performed on three non-consecutive days (i.e., Monday, Wednesday, Friday, etc.). This allows at least 48 hours rest between workouts, ensuring adequate non-symptomatic recuperation. Adherence to the program is not limited and in short order, you'll be well on your way to sculpting your body perfect!

Body Conditioning Phase

The body conditioning phase is for beginners and relatively new to training (less than six months experience). As a novice, your aim should be to lay a foundation of muscle on which to build. One of the biggest mistakes women make when they begin a fitness regimen is attempting to shape what they do not have. Usual too common in a woman to gravitate to the inner and outer thigh area (due to the exclusion of all other exercises). Because you cannot spot reduce body fat, special local exercises have limited value and you do so at a loss of muscle. To illustrate this point, let's adopt the analogy of building a house. A builder cannot begin to construct walls or a roof before a foundation is in place. Similarly, you are the builder of your physique and must develop a foundation that will afford you the greatest potential in sculpting your body.

To build a foundation of muscle, this phase employs a total body approach to training. You will exercise each major muscle group every three days, workout, providing local based coverage of your entire body. Total body training allows you to work each muscle maximally, thereby stimulating a maximum amount of muscle fibers in each training session. You will repeat

total body your entire body to adapt to the stresses of training, helping to increase overall development.

For each muscle group, you will use only one exercise per training session, performing three sets per exercise. Thus, each week you will work your entire body three times. Although training your muscles this frequently might seem overwhelming at first, the limited volume of the workload mitigates the risk of overtraining. By performing only one exercise per muscle group, you regulate the amount of stress applied to each muscle. This allows you to quickly recover from a workout and enables you to train each muscle on a regular basis.

You should perform all sets with a weight that is somewhat challenging without completely taxing your resources. In other words, by your final repetition, the weight should begin to feel a little heavy without causing you to really struggle. As you gain strength, increase the amount of weight to maintain the prescribed training intensity. Remember, if the weight is too light, it provides an inadequate stimulus, you won't derive proper results.

Compound movements such as squats, rows and presses should be utilized whenever possible. Because of their multi-joint nature, compound movements stimulate the greatest amount of muscle, as well as strengthening your connective tissue. This will help you achieve balanced development, limit the onset and negate the possibility of developing muscular deficiencies as you progress in your endeavors.

Toning and Shaping Phase

The toning and shaping phase of this system is your entrée into body sculpting. It is ideal for those who have already built a physical foundation and that now concentrate on creating a firm, firm, firm's bringing your body in a aesthetic proportion, creating symmetry between major groups. Each muscle group should flow into the next, creating harmonized lines that complement one another. You should begin to

assess your body's strengths and weaknesses, becoming in tune with its intricacies.

This phase incorporates several changes to further your results. For one, the total volume of exercises and sets you perform for each muscle group will increase. This allows you to work a muscle more intensively, improving your prospects for size and tone. Accordingly, your muscles need a greater recovery period to recuperate from the effects of this added stress. Thus, you'll split your workout into two parts. You'll train half your body in one workout and the other half in the next workout. The net effect is that you'll train each muscle group three times every two weeks (instead of once) twice a week, as in the body conditioning routine, giving your body twice as much recuperation as before.

You should now employ two exercises for each muscle group, as opposed to one in the body conditioning routine. This allows you to work your muscles from different angles and lines of pull in the same training session, augmenting your body sculpting potential. Strive to use one compound movement and one isolation movement for each muscle group whenever possible. Of course, this is not feasible in the arms, calves or abdominals because they involve a single joint. By combining exercises in this way, you'll stimulate your muscles to their fullest extent.

You will again perform three sets for each exercise. Because you're now using two exercises per muscle group, you'll perform a total of six sets for each major muscle complex. In the body conditioning routine, you performed only three sets. Initially, this increase in training volume will be a shock to your system. You should expect to have reduced energy levels for several weeks until your body adapts to this extended workload. With a short time, though, you'll readily adjust to these demands, and your exercise tolerance will improve dramatically.

The routine includes a progression of intensity in which each successive set will require more effort. As in the body conditioning routine, your first set