

SPECIFICATIONS: 100% NATURAL // GVT PROTOCOL

THE PRIME STANDARD

**RECLAIM YOUR BODY.
LOOK YOUNGER.
FEEL STRONGER.**

**THE 20-MINUTE METHOD TO
RECLAIM YOUR BODY AND
BUILD A STRONGER PHYSIQUE.**

BY COACH MARK BOJOVIC
NATURAL AT 45

**RECLAIM
YOUR BODY.
LOOK
YOUNGER.
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00 // LEGAL & MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

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01

THE

MANIFESTO

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The Call to Action: Why I Call You an Athlete

In this book, I address you as an Athlete. This isn't a label based on your current professional status, your age, or whether you have a trophy on your mantle. It is a mandatory psychological shift.

We assume the role of an athlete because at every level, a professional athlete treats their body with the utmost importance and respect. Your body is the only vehicle you have on this side of heaven. If you treat it like an old, neglected machine, it will perform like one. If you treat it like the high-performance vehicle it was designed to be, it will take you anywhere you want to go. By calling you an athlete, I am challenging you to live up to the name. It is time to stop being a spectator in your own life and start treating your health with professional stewardship.

The Story: From 273 lbs to the Starting Line

I didn't arrive at these principles from a life of perfect health. My path was paved with setbacks. I played college football and studied Kinesiology (Exercise Science), learning the deep mechanics of human movement. Later, I worked as a certified personal trainer and obsessed over natural bodybuilding nutrition. I had the knowledge, but life—and its weight—eventually caught up with me.

Between the stress of life and the crushing weight of depression, I spiraled. I suffered two knee surgeries and a third major knee injury that felt like the final blow. By the age of 40, I had reached a body weight of 273 pounds. I was out of

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2021, Age 40, 273 lbs



2023, Age 42, 223 lbs

shape, out of energy, and losing my grip on the man I wanted to be.

But at 40, I stopped making excuses. I returned to the science I knew and started applying the exact principles you are about to read.

By the time I was 42, I had transformed. I lost 50 pounds and built a physique I was finally proud of. Today, at 44 and training for my second HYROX competition, I weigh 216 pounds. I am consistently increasing my Lean Body Mass, decreasing my body fat, and I can finally show a six-pack to my wife and kids.

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The Standard: Natural, Youthful, and Capable

Choosing the role of an athlete means committing to a specific standard of excellence. We aren't just looking for "fitness"; we are looking for a complete biological upgrade through three pillars:

- **100% Natural Growth:** We do not take shortcuts. We rely on the synergy of hard training, precise nutrition, and optimal recovery. By staying natural, you aren't just building a "look"—you are building genuine, lasting health that functions as well as it appears.
- **The Age-Defying Silhouette:** Many men in their 40s fall into the trap of looking "weathered." By focusing on fascia expansion and muscle density, we reverse that trend. The goal is to look and move better at 45 than you did at 35. We want a frame that projects vitality and strength, not the wear and tear of a sedentary life.
- **Athletic Capability:** We aren't building "trophy muscles" that are useless in the real world. We are building a body that can compete. Whether it's a HYROX race, a CrossFit competition, or just keeping up with your kids, your physique should be a visual representation of your capability.

The Promise: Change is Possible

I am sharing my story because I want to encourage every man who thinks he's gone too far to turn back. Whether you are battling old injuries, a demanding career, or the weight of depression, change is possible. Your vehicle may have some miles on it and a few dents, but the engine is still capable of greatness

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It won't happen overnight. It is a process of discipline and consistent application of the Prime Standard. If a man with three knee injuries can rebuild his life and compete in world-class endurance events in his 40s, so can you.

Your vehicle is waiting. Let's get to work.



2025, Age 44, 220 lbs

02

THE

BIOLOGICAL

ENGINE

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The Prime Warmup: Protection and Preparation

Before you begin your first working set, you must raise your core body temperature. Spend 5 to 10 minutes on a light aerobic movement or dynamic stretching specifically for the muscle groups being worked that day. Once your body is warm, perform 2 to 4 ramp-up sets with light weights. These sets are not for fatigue. They are to "prime" the nervous system and ensure your form is locked in. Once the movement feels fluid and the blood is in the muscle, you are ready for Working Set #1.

The GVT Protocol: The Science of the 10x10

While the 10x10 is the ultimate standard for maximal growth, its power is only unlocked once your body has been properly conditioned through the Graduated Loading Protocol mentioned in Section 02.

German Volume Training is not about variety. It is about profound, localized stress. By performing ten sets of ten repetitions of a single, primary movement, we are forcing the body to adapt in a way that standard bodybuilding splits cannot achieve. This high-volume approach triggers massive sarcoplasmic hypertrophy, which is the key to that dense, athletic look. For the natural lifter in his 40's, this volume is the signal the body needs to maintain and build muscle without the need for chemical assistance.

We are not just moving weights. We are creating a systemic demand for growth.

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The 60-Second Sharp Rule: The Law of Density

The absolute foundation of this program is the 60-second rest interval. In your 40's, we are not interested in standing around the water fountain. By keeping the rest to exactly one minute, we create a cumulative fatigue that forces the muscle to stay engorged with blood. This is what creates the "Permanent Pump" look. If you rest for 90 seconds or two minutes, the pressure in the muscle drops, the fascia stops stretching, and you lose the volumizing effect. Sixty seconds is the threshold.

The 55-Second Trigger: Tactical Execution

To follow the 60-second law, you must use the 55-Second Trigger. Most men wait until their watch hits 60 seconds to start reaching for the dumbbells. By the time they are in position, they have actually rested for 70 or 75 seconds. They have broken the law.

The 55-Second Trigger ensures you are "Under Load" the moment the clock strikes 60. When your lap timer hits 55 seconds, you are done breathing. You are done sweating. You grab the weights. You set your stance. At 60 seconds, the first rep begins. This is how you keep the session under 20 minutes and keep the muscle belly expanding.

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Coach Mark's Integration Note:

- The Synergistic Effect: The 60-Second Sharp Rule provides the biological stimulus (fascia stretching), while the 55-Second Trigger provides the professional discipline. Without the trigger, the rule is just a suggestion. With the trigger, the rule becomes a transformation.

Tempo and Form: Controlling the Movement

As a natural athlete in your 40's, your joints and connective tissues are your most valuable assets. Lifting with ego-driven, explosive movements is a recipe for injury. We prioritize a controlled eccentric phase on every repetition. By slowing down the lowering portion of the lift, we increase the time under tension and ensure that the muscle is doing the work, not momentum. This control is what creates deep muscle separation and structural thickness. Form is the differentiator between a guy who just "lifts" and an athlete who builds. Master the movement before you increase the load.

03

THE

GRADUATED

LOADING

PROTOCOL

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Earning the 10x10: For Beginners and Intermediates

German Volume Training is an advanced protocol. It is designed to push the limits of your recovery and muscle endurance. If you have not trained with this level of volume before, jumping straight into 10 sets of 10 reps can lead to severe Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS) and potential overtraining. We use a graduated approach to ensure your body and connective tissues are ready for the Standard.

The First Cycle: The Foundation (Sets 3-5)

Beginners or those new to GVT should start with 3 to 5 sets of the primary lift. The goal here is to master the tempo and the 60-second rest interval without crushing your central nervous system. If your DOMS is manageable and you are recovering fully between sessions, you are ready to progress.

The Second Cycle: The Build (Sets 5-7)

Once you have adapted to the volume of the first cycle, increase your primary lift to 5 to 7 sets. This is where you will begin to feel the true metabolic stress and the cumulative pump. Stay at this level for at least two weeks.

The Prime Level: The 10x10 Standard

Only once you have mastered 7 sets with perfect form and manageable recovery do you move to the full 10 sets. This is the advanced level. Secondary

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lifts, supersets, and drop-sets are strictly prohibited until you have reached this level and confirmed your body is ready for additional volume. Do not rush the process. Longevity is the goal.

06

THE

PROGRAM -

6-DAY

ROTATION

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Day 1: Chest // Building the Upper-Body Armor

The goal of Day 1 is to maximize the volume of the upper pectoral shelf. As we enter our 40's, the upper chest is often the first area to lose fullness. By prioritizing the incline, we ensure the frame looks powerful and athletic under a t-shirt or a suit.

- **Primary Lift: Incline Dumbbell Press**

- The Target Volume: 10 Sets // 10 Reps // 60-Second Rest.
- The Loading: Select a weight you could normally press for 20 reps. If you are in Cycle 1 or 2 of the Graduated Loading Protocol, perform only your assigned 3 to 7 sets. If you are at the 10-set Standard, proceed through all 100 repetitions.
- The Focus: Maintain a 30-degree to 45-degree incline. Control the eccentric phase for a 3-second count. Do not bounce the dumbbells at the bottom. The 60-second rest will create a massive fascia stretch by the middle sets. Keep the tension constant.

- **Secondary Lift: Weighted Dips (Advanced Standard Only)**

- Volume: 3 Sets // To Failure.
- The Focus: This is the ultimate builder for the lower pectoral line and the triceps. Lean your torso forward to emphasize the chest. If you cannot perform weighted dips with perfect form, use body weight only and focus on a deep, controlled stretch at the bottom. Do not attempt this until you have mastered the 10-set Primary Lift.

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- **Finisher: Low-to-High Cable Flyes (Advanced Standard Only)**

- Volume: 3 Sets // 15 Reps.
- The Focus: This specific angle targets the "inner" and "upper" fibers of the chest. Squeeze the handles together at eye level and hold the contraction for one second. This is a blood-volume movement designed to finalize the pump and maximize the metabolic "burn."

Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- The Pump: Remind yourself that the 60-second rest is not a suggestion. It is the mechanism that keeps the muscle belly volumized. By the time you reach the Cable Flyes, your chest should feel tight and fully "filled out."

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Day 2: Biceps // Establishing Peak Arm Density

The goal of Day 2 is to create thick, dense biceps that signify power. We are not looking for "light toning." We are looking to expand the muscle fascia and force the bicep to sit higher and fuller on the humerus. By hitting the 10x10 on a heavy compound movement first, we trigger the hormonal response necessary for growth.

- **Primary Lift: Standing Barbell Curls**

- The Target Volume: 10 Sets // 10 Reps // 60-Second Rest.
- The Loading: Use a straight bar or an EZ-curl bar if you have wrist issues. The weight should be manageable but challenging. If you are in Cycle 1 or 2 of the Graduated Loading Protocol, stop at your assigned set count.
- The Focus: Keep your elbows locked at your sides. Do not swing the weight or use your lower back to cheat. Squeeze the bar as hard as possible at the peak of the movement. The short rest window will force a massive pump by set six. This constant pressure is what stretches the fascia to allow for a larger muscle belly.

- **Secondary Lift: Seated Incline Dumbbell Curls (Advanced Standard Only)**

- Volume: 3 Sets // 12 Reps.
- The Focus: Set the bench to a 45-degree incline. This position places the bicep in an extreme long-head stretch at the bottom. Control the descent. This movement is critical for lengthening the muscle's appearance and ensuring it looks "connected" from the shoulder to the elbow.

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- **Finisher: Alternating Dumbbell Hammer Curls (Advanced Standard Only)**

- Volume: 3 Sets // 10 Reps per arm.
- The Focus: This targets the brachialis and the brachioradialis. By building the muscle that sits underneath the bicep, you effectively "push" the bicep peak higher. It also adds the necessary forearm thickness to complete the athletic look.

Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- The "No-Swing" Rule: If you have to move your torso to get the weight up, it is too heavy. An athlete controls the weight. The weight does not control the athlete.
- The Pump: By the time you finish the Hammer Curls, your arms should feel like they are ready to burst through your sleeves. This is the volumizing effect we want to carry throughout the rest of your day.

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Day 3: Legs // The Foundation of Athletic Power

The objective of Day 3 is to build a powerful, functional base. We are not just looking for size. We are looking for the "piston-like" strength of an athlete. Heavy leg training increases natural growth hormone and testosterone levels, which are essential for the natural athlete over 40. We prioritize the squat to build the frame and the "teardrop" of the quadriceps.

- **Primary Lift: Barbell High-Bar Squat**

- The Target Volume: 10 Sets // 10 Reps // 60-Second Rest.
- The Loading: Select a weight that allows for perfect depth and a vertical torso. If you are in Cycle 1 or 2 of the Graduated Loading Protocol, perform your assigned 3 to 7 sets. If you are at the 10-set Standard, prepare for the most demanding 40 minutes of your week.
- The Focus: Keep your heels planted and your chest up. The 60-second rest is designed to challenge your recovery. By the final few sets, you should be breathing heavily and sweating. This is the sign of metabolic stress. It forces your body to become more efficient at recovery and nutrient partitioning without hitting a true "red line" heart rate.

- **Secondary Lift: Bulgarian Split Squats (Advanced Standard Only)**

- Volume: 3 Sets // 10 Reps per leg.
- The Focus: This is a true athletic movement. It identifies and corrects side-to-side imbalances while placing an extreme stretch on the hip flexors and quads. Hold dumbbells at your sides and keep your core braced. Do not attempt this until you have mastered the 10-set Squat protocol.

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- **Finisher: Leg Extensions or Goblet Squats (Advanced Standard Only)**

- Volume: 3 Sets // 15 Reps.
- The Focus: This is a high-rep "blood-mover." The goal is to push as much blood as possible into the quadriceps to maximize the fascia stretch and volumize the muscle belly. Perform these with a slow, controlled tempo and a hard squeeze at the top of every rep.

Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- The "Engine" Check: If your heart rate is redlining during the 60-second rest, you are doing it right. This is where we build the "Athlete" half of the equation.
- The Fullness: Proper leg training creates a systemic pump that keeps your entire body looking "fuller" and more dense throughout the day. Do not skip the foundational work.

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Day 5: Triceps // Locking in Structural Thickness

Triceps make up the majority of the arm's mass. Building the lateral and long heads of the triceps is what creates that "filled-out" sleeve look. We focus on movements that offer a deep stretch and a powerful lockout.

- **Primary Lift: Dips**

- The Target Volume: 10 Sets // 10 Reps // 60-Second Rest.
- Equipment Options: This can be performed on parallel bars, a box, a bench, or an assisted dip machine. Choose the variation that allows you to hit the 10x10 with perfect control.
- The Focus: Keep your torso upright to isolate the triceps and avoid leaning forward into the chest. Lower yourself until your elbows are at a 90-degree angle, then drive back up to a strong contraction. By set eight, the heavy breathing and sweating will be a factor. Use the 55-Second Trigger to ensure your hands are on the bars and your body is ready to lift at exactly one minute.

- **Secondary Lift: Overhead Dumbbell Extensions (Advanced Standard Only)**

- Volume: 3 Sets // 12 Reps.
- The Focus: This movement targets the long head of the triceps by placing it in a deep, overhead stretch. Keep your elbows tucked toward your head and do not let them flare out. This stretch is vital for pulling the fascia apart and creating that "hanging" muscle belly that looks massive from the side view.

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Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- Dip Progression: If you are a beginner, start with bench dips or an assisted machine. The goal is to complete the 10x10 with zero "ego reps." As you get stronger, progress to bodyweight or weighted parallel bars.
- Shoulder Health: If you feel any "pinching" in the front of the shoulder during dips, reduce your depth slightly. For middle-aged men, the goal is muscle tension, not joint destruction.
- The "Locked-In" Pump: By combining the heavy pressing power of the dip with the deep stretch of the overhead extension, you are attacking the tricep from both ends. This ensures the arm looks thick from the shoulder all the way down to the elbow.

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Day 6: Back // Finalizing the Width and Posture

The objective of Day 6 is to build a silhouette that commands respect. A dense back provides the "V-taper" that makes the waist look smaller and the shoulders look broader. We prioritize rowing movements because they build the thickness of the mid-back and the width of the lats simultaneously.

- **Primary Lift: Seated Cable Rows**

- The Target Volume: 10 Sets // 10 Reps // 60-Second Rest.
- The Loading: Use a neutral-grip (V-bar) handle. Select a weight that allows you to pull to your midsection without using your lower back to swing the weight. If you are in the early cycles of the Graduated Loading Protocol, perform your 3 to 7 sets and stop.
- The Focus: Initiate the pull by retracting your shoulder blades. Squeeze the muscles of the mid-back hard at the peak of the movement. As the sets progress, the 60-second rest will become your primary challenge. By set nine, the heavy breathing and sweating should be fully present. Use the 55-Second Trigger to ensure you are seated, gripped, and ready to pull at the 60-second mark.

- **Secondary Lift: Straight-Arm Lat Pulldowns (Advanced Standard Only)**

- Volume: 3 Sets // 15 Reps.
- The Focus: This is a pure isolation movement for the lats. Keep your arms straight and pull the bar down to your thighs using only your back. This creates an incredible stretch at the top and a massive pump at the bottom. It is the perfect movement to finish stretching the fascia after the heavy rowing is complete.

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Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- The "Anti-Hunch" Rule: Focus on keeping your chest proud and your spine neutral. We are building the posture of an athlete. Do not let the weight pull your shoulders into a rounded position during the eccentric phase.
- The 20-Minute Finish: Because this is the final day of the rotation, your systemic fatigue will be at its highest. Stay disciplined on the clock. Finishing this 20-minute block with intensity sets the tone for your recovery day.
- Grip Strength: If your grip begins to fail before your back does, feel free to use lifting straps. We are here to grow the back; do not let your forearms be the limiting factor in your 10x10 progression.

05

THE

REDLINE

PROTOCOLS

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The 4-Minute Finisher: High-Intensity Variety

Once you have reached the 10-set Standard in your lifting session, you have earned the right to enter the Redline. These protocols are designed to push your metabolic conditioning and finalize the "Athletic Look" by incinerating body fat.

WHAT IS TABATA?

Developed by Dr. Izumi Tabata for Olympic speed skaters, a "Tabata" is a specific form of High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) designed to maximize both aerobic and anaerobic capacity in a very short window.

The Math of the Redline:

- 20 Seconds of Work: Absolute maximum effort. You are "Redlining" the engine.
- 10 Seconds of Rest: Total recovery.
- 8 Rounds: Totaling exactly 4 minutes.

In the Prime Standard, we don't use this for "cardio." We use it to trigger EPOC (Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption), ensuring your body continues to burn fuel at a higher rate for hours after you leave the gym.

Because your lifting session is capped at 20 minutes, adding a Redline Protocol keeps your entire gym footprint under 30 minutes while delivering maximum impact.

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Tabata Structures for the Redline

Depending on your available equipment (your "Inventory") and your mental focus, you can structure your 4-minute Redline in four different ways.

1. The Monostructural (1 Exercise)

- Best for: Rower, Echo Bike, or Sprints.
- Execution: Perform the exact same movement for all 8 rounds.
- The Benefit: Maximum simplicity. You don't have to think—you just have to push. By round 6, this becomes a pure test of your cardiovascular ceiling.

2. The Alternating Duo (2 Exercises)

- Best for: Agonist/Antagonist movements (e.g., Push/Pull).
- Execution: Alternate between two movements (A-B-A-B-A-B-A-B).
- The Benefit: This prevents local muscle fatigue from being the "limiting factor" before your heart rate hits the redline.
- Example: Round 1: Kettlebell Swings // Round 2: Burpees.

3. The Functional Flow (4 Exercises)

- Best for: Full-body metabolic demand.
- Execution: Move through 4 exercises, repeating the circuit twice.
- The Benefit: Keeps the heart rate high while challenging your coordination and "Athlete" capability under fatigue.
- Example: * Rounds 1 & 5: Box Jumps
 - Rounds 2 & 6: Battle Ropes
 - Rounds 3 & 7: Wall Balls
 - Rounds 4 & 8: Plate Hops

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4. The "Inventory" Gauntlet (8 Exercises)

- Best for: High-variety finishers and mental engagement.
- Execution: 8 different movements, one for each 20-second window. No repeats.
- The Benefit: High psychological engagement. Because you only do each movement once, you can push with 100% intensity knowing you won't have to revisit it.
- Example: Burpees -> KB Swings -> Air Squats -> Pushups -> Lunges -> Mountain Climbers -> Plank Jacks -> High Knees.

COACH MARK'S EXECUTION NOTES:

- The 10-Second Transition: If you are using 4 or 8 exercises, your equipment must be laid out in a "station" format. You only have 10 seconds to move. If you spend 15 seconds walking to the next machine, the Redline is broken.
- The Standard: Whether you choose 1 exercise or 8, the goal is the same: intensity. If you finish the 4 minutes and can carry on a normal conversation, you didn't hit the Redline.
- The 4x4 Scale: If you are performing the Norwegian Protocol (see end of chapter, Level 2), you can mix these up. You might do a "Monostructural" Tabata for Round 1, rest 4 minutes, and then hit a "Functional Flow" for Round 2.

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Common Inventory Options:

- Medicine Balls: Wall Balls
- Deadballs: Overhead Slams
- Functional Tools: Battle Ropes or Kettlebell Swings
- Bodyweight & Plyo: Box Jumps, Burpees, or Step-ups
- Conditioning: Assault Bike sprints or Rower bursts

Example: The "Prime Four" Rotation

- Station 1: Battle Rope Slams (20s Work / 10s Rest)
- Station 2: Box Step-ups (20s Work / 10s Rest)
- Station 3: Slam balls with deadball (20s Work / 10s Rest)
- Station 4: Burpees (20s Work / 10s Rest)
- Repeat the circuit one more time to complete the 4 minutes

The Redline Scaling System

The Redline isn't just about "burning calories"; it is about expanding your aerobic and anaerobic ceiling. We utilize a tiered approach so you can move from a metabolic spark to an elite cardiovascular engine.

Level 1: The Standard Spark (1 x 4-Minute Tabata)

This is the baseline for the 20-minute daily protocol. One 4-minute block of high-intensity intervals (20s Work / 10s Rest) to trigger the hormonal response and EPOC (Excess Post-exercise Oxygen Consumption). This is your minimum daily requirement.

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Level 2: The Norwegian Protocol (The 4x4 Scale)

If you have the time and the recovery capacity—or if you are specifically training for an event like CrossFit or HYROX—you can scale the Redline into a 4x4 Norwegian Protocol. This is widely recognized as the gold standard for increasing VO2 Max.

- **The Structure:** Perform one 4-minute Redline Tabata.
- **The Recovery:** Rest for exactly 4 minutes (active recovery, like slow walking).
- **The Volume:** Repeat for a total of 4 Tabata rounds.

The Result: This 32-minute session (including rest) significantly increases your heart's stroke volume and your body's ability to utilize oxygen. It is the fastest way to turn a "commuter engine" into a "performance engine."

Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- **EPOC Overdrive:** The beauty of the 4x4 is the "Afterburn." By pushing your heart rate into that upper threshold four times, your body will be consuming extra oxygen (and burning extra fuel) for hours after you leave the gym.
- **Longevity Metric:** We don't just track LBM; we track performance. Increasing your VO2 Max is like adding a turbocharger to your vehicle. It makes every other part of your life—and your recovery between lifting sets—significantly easier.

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- **When to Scale:** Don't jump into the 4x4 on Day 1. Start with one Tabata. Once your recovery heart rate improves, add a second round. Earn the right to hit the 4x4.
- **The "All-Out" Rule:** Tabata only works if the 20-second bursts are performed at 100% intensity. By the final 2 minutes, the heavy breathing and sweating should be at their absolute peak.
- **Transition Speed:** With only 10 seconds of rest, you must have your stations set up in close proximity. Do not waste time walking across the gym. This is a 4-minute sprint to the finish line.
- **The Finisher Mindset:** This is where you build the mental toughness of an athlete. The lifting built the muscle belly; the Redline builds the engine.

06

THE

PLAN B:

ADAPTATION

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The Continuous Rotation: Program Over Calendar

One of the biggest psychological hurdles for men is the "Monday Reset" trap. If they miss a Tuesday, they feel the week is "ruined" and wait until the following Monday to start over. The Prime Standard does not live on a calendar; it lives in a cycle.

The Rule of the Next Day:

If life gets in the way and you miss a day—or even two—you do not "skip" that workout. You simply pick up exactly where you left off.

- If you finished Day 3 (Legs) on a Thursday and didn't get back to the gym until Sunday, Sunday becomes Day 4 (Delts).
- The sequence is the priority. Day 1 always follows Day 6, regardless of which day of the week it falls on. This ensures no muscle group is neglected and the hormonal balance of the full rotation remains intact.

The Consolidation Protocol (Emergency Only)

On days when a full 20-minute session is impossible, perform a "Maintenance Strike."

- Choose the primary lift of the day you are on.
- Perform a minimum of 3 to 5 sets (Cycle 1 volume) to maintain the "muscle memory" and blood flow.
- This keeps the fascia primed and prevents the muscle belly from losing its fullness while you navigate a busy schedule.

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Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- **The Log is King:** Because Day 1 isn't always Monday, keeping a training log is vital. Mark down the date and the Day Number (1 through 6) so you always know exactly where you are in the rotation.
- **Consistency over Perfection:** It is better to finish a 6-day rotation over 8 or 9 days than to skip days 4, 5, and 6 just because the "week ended."
- **The Momentum Factor:** Picking up where you left off keeps the metabolic momentum moving. Every time you step back into the gym, you are simply continuing a journey, not starting a new one.

07

THE

FUEL

BLUEPRINT

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The Metabolic Engine: Upgrading Your BMR

Most men mistakenly view the gym as a place to "burn fat." This is a fundamental error. Your 20-minute training session is for Micro-Tearing muscle tissue, Stretching muscle fascia, and inducing a powerful Endocrine Response. We are triggering the natural growth hormones your body is capable of producing to build Lean Body Mass (LBM).

The Physics of the Burn:

- BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate): This is your largest calorie burner, accounting for the majority of your Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE).
- The Active Tissue Advantage: Muscle is "active tissue," meaning it is metabolically expensive for your body to maintain. By increasing your LBM, you elevate your baseline energy requirements. You are essentially upgrading from a 4-cylinder engine to a V8; even at an idle, the V8 consumes more fuel.
- The Composition Shift: As your LBM increases, your body becomes more efficient at utilizing calories for repair rather than storage. This makes maintaining a lean physique a byproduct of your muscle mass, not just your cardio.

The 215 Rule: Protein as the Anchor

Precision is the difference between a hobbyist and an athlete. For men following this program, protein is the non-negotiable structural requirement for the engine we are building.

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- **The Target:** Your daily protein intake in grams must equal your target body weight in pounds.
- **The Example:** If your goal weight is 215 lbs, you must consume at least 215g of protein every single day.
- **The Every-Meal Rule:** Every single time you eat, there must be a protein source present. No exceptions.

Feeding the Gain: The Anti-Catabolic Protocol

To build this engine, you must protect your gains from your own hormones. When you go into a prolonged fasted state—specifically more than 3 hours between meals—your body increases catabolic hormones like cortisol. This process begins to eat away at your hard-earned muscle tissue to provide energy, effectively "shrinking" your metabolic engine.

- **The Frequency:** Spread your protein and nutrients across 5 to 6 small meals daily.
- **The Goal:** This consistent drip-feed ensures your body has the substrate it needs for recovery and growth at all times, keeping the "fire" of the metabolism burning without ever consuming its own muscle for fuel.

Macro Management and The Carb Pivot

Once your protein anchor is set, you must adjust your energy sources (carbs and fats) based on your specific biology.

- **The Carb Sensitivity Pivot:** For men who are more carb-sensitive, keep your daily carbohydrate intake on the moderately low side—roughly 150g to 200g daily.

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- The Fat Variable: Adjust your healthy fats (avocados, nuts, olive oil) accordingly to hit your remaining calorie goals. This balance keeps your energy stable and systemic inflammation low.

Tracking and Data: Digital & Physical

We do not guess; we drive decisions with data.

- Calorie Tracking: Use a free app like MyFitnessPal or Cronometer. Plug in your current weight, goal weight, and activity level to find your TDEE.
- The Surplus/Deficit Rule:
 - To Cut: Reduce your TDEE by 10–20%.
 - To Lean Gain: Increase your TDEE by a small surplus of 10%.
- The Caliper Check: Weight is a deceptive metric. Use affordable Accu-Measure fat calipers on a monthly basis to track your actual Lean Body Mass (LBM) and Fat Mass.

Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- Baseline Demand: Think of every pound of muscle as a new employee in your factory that needs to be "paid" in calories. The more employees you have, the higher your daily "payroll" (burn) becomes.
- The "Idle" Burn: This is why athletes can eat more than sedentary men of the same weight. Their "idle" speed is set higher because their bodies are constantly working to maintain and repair dense muscle tissue.
- Data Over Emotion: If the scale goes up but your caliper skinfold stays the same or goes down, you are winning. That is the definition of building a more efficient metabolic engine.

08

THE

RECOVERY

AUDIT

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The Growth Window: Sleep as Performance

You do not build muscle in the gym; you build it while you sleep. For men over 40, sleep is the most potent "supplement" available. This is the only time your body releases the peak amounts of natural growth hormone and testosterone required to repair the micro-tearing from your 10x10 sessions.

- **The 7-Hour Standard:** Aim for a minimum of 7 to 8 hours of quality sleep. Anything less, and you are operating with a compromised endocrine system.
- **The Deep Sleep Environment:** Keep your room cool (around 65-68°F / 18-20°C) and completely dark. This triggers melatonin production and ensures you spend more time in REM and deep sleep cycles where physical repair occurs.

Active Recovery: Keeping the Blood Moving

On the days you aren't hitting your 20-minute lifting protocol, you should still be moving.

- **Low-Intensity Steady State (LISS):** A 30-minute walk or light cycle.
- **The Purpose:** This isn't for calorie burning. It's to facilitate blood flow to the muscles you've been punishing. Blood carries the nutrients from your "215 Rule" protein intake to the damaged tissues, accelerating the repair process and reducing soreness.

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Systemic Indicators: Listening to the Body

As an athlete, you must develop a high degree of "bio-feedback."

- **Grip Strength:** If your grip feels significantly weaker than usual during your warmup, your central nervous system (CNS) may be overtaxed.
- **Resting Heart Rate:** If your morning resting heart rate is 5-10 beats higher than your average, it's a sign of systemic fatigue.
- **The Adjustment:** If these markers are off, don't skip the day—just drop to a Plan B maintenance strike (3-5 sets) to allow the CNS to catch up without breaking the habit of the rotation.

Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- **The "Morning After" Test:** If you wake up feeling "flat" instead of "full," check two things: your hydration and your sleep. Usually, a lack of one of these is what prevents the muscle belly from holding its volume.
- **Recovery is Active:** Recovery isn't just "doing nothing." It is the intentional act of putting your body in the best possible position to rebuild. Treat your sleep with the same discipline you treat the 60-Second Sharp Rule.

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Data Over Emotion

In the heat of a 20-minute session, your "feeling" is a liar. You will feel like quitting at set six. You will feel like the weight is too heavy at set eight. The Prime Tracker is designed to keep you objective. It turns your transformation into a math problem.

The Daily Training Sheet

Every workout should be logged with three specific metrics:

- 1.The Cycle Level: Are you currently in Cycle 1 (3 Sets), Cycle 2 (5 Sets), Cycle 3 (7 Sets), or the 10-Set Standard?
- 2.The Load: The exact weight used for the primary lift.
- 3.The "Redline" Completion: A simple Yes/No on whether you completed the 4-minute Tabata finisher.

Example Log Entry:

- Date: Thursday, Oct 12
- Session: Day 1 (Quads)
- Primary Lift: Back Squat // 225 lbs
- Volume: Cycle 3 (7 Sets of 10)
- Rest: 60 Seconds Sharp (Confirmed)
- Redline: Yes (Assault Bike / KB Swings)

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The Monthly Progress Audit

Once a month, you perform the "Audit." This is where you compare your digital data (tracking apps) with your physical data (calipers).

Metric	Start of Month	End of Month	Change
Body Weight	225 lbs	223 lbs	-2 lbs
Caliper Measurement	18mm	16mm	-2 mm
Lean Body Mass	180 lbs	182 lbs	+2 lbs
Avg Daily Protein	210 g	215 g	Goal Met

Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- The "Fullness" Journal: I suggest adding a small "Notes" section to your log. Write down one word describing your muscle pump (e.g., "Flat," "Tight," "Vascular"). If you are consistently "Flat," go back to Section 07 and check your carb and hydration levels.
- The Cycle Graduation: Do not move from Cycle 2 to Cycle 3 until you can complete all 5 sets with perfect form and the 60-second rest feels "manageable." We are looking for quality volume, not just surviving the sets.
- The Six-Pack Milestone: When you hit your goal LBM and your caliper measurements drop to your target range, take a photo. Not for social media—for your own "Vehicle Log." See the progress you've made from where you started.

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The Truth About Supplements

Supplements are not "make or break." They are tools used to fill the gaps when solid food is inconvenient or when the physical demand of your training—like preparing for a HYROX or CrossFit event—exceeds what your baseline diet provides.

As an athlete, your money is better spent on high-quality steaks and eggs. However, used correctly, the following stack can support your recovery and help you hit your daily targets.

The Foundation (Daily Use)

- **Whey Protein:** Use this to help reach your 215 Rule goal. 1–2 servings per day is a convenient way to ensure you hit your protein target without feeling like you are constantly force-feeding solid meals.
- **Creatine Monohydrate (5g):** The most researched supplement in history. It helps with ATP production (energy) and pulls water into the muscle cell, assisting that "full" look and the fascia-stretching pump.
- **L-Glutamine (5g):** Vital for gut health and muscle recovery, especially as you increase your training frequency.
- **The Health Guard:** A high-quality Multivitamin, Vitamin C, and Fish Oils (for joint health and inflammation management).
- **Nightly ZMA:** Zinc, Magnesium, and Vitamin B6. This is essential for deep sleep and supporting natural testosterone production.

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The Performance "Redline" Additions

When preparing for grueling, high-intensity endurance events (like a HYROX race), you can add specific tools to manage the "burn":

- L-Citrulline Malate (3-6g): To improve blood flow and the "pump."
- Beta-Alanine: To help buffer the lactic acid buildup during those long, high-output sessions.

The "Save Your Money" List

Don't be fooled by the marketing machine. As a natural athlete, you should avoid the following:

- Fat Burners: These are just glorified, overpriced caffeine pills. If you need a metabolic boost, drink a black coffee or take a cheap caffeine pill.
- Mass Gainers: These are essentially protein shakes loaded with cheap sugars. Save your money and eat real, natural carbohydrates like bananas, rice, or potatoes.
- BCAAs: If you are hitting your protein goal and training in short, 20-minute windows, you do not need these. They are an unnecessary expense.

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Sample Daily Meal Schedule

Based on a 215lb Target Weight (215g Protein)

This is my personal "Daily Rhythm." It is designed for a man with a career and a family who needs to stay in an anabolic state without spending all day in the kitchen.

- 07:00 AM // Meal 1 (The Foundation): * 4 Whole Eggs (Scrambled)
 - 1/3 cup Oatmeal with berries
 - Supps: Multivitamin, Fish Oil, Vit C
- 10:00 AM // Meal 2 (The Mid-Morning Pivot): * 1.5 scoops Whey Protein (approx. 40g-45g)
 - 1 Apple or a handful of almonds
- 01:00 PM // Meal 3 (The Lunch Anchor): * 250 grams Grilled Chicken Breast or Lean Ground Turkey
 - 100 grams White Rice
 - Green Greens (Spinach or Broccoli)
- 04:00 PM // Meal 4 (The Pre-Training Fuel): * 1 Greek Yogurt (Plain, High Protein) or 1 scoop Whey
 - Pre-Training Supps (Optional): Creatine (5g), L-Citrulline
- 05:30 PM // TRAINING (The 20-Minute Session + Redline)
- 06:30 PM // Meal 5 (The Recovery Strike - Post-Workout): * 250 grams White Fish or Lean Steak
 - 100 grams Potato or 100 grams Rice
 - Note: This is your largest carb window to drive recovery.
- 09:30 PM // Meal 6 (The Nightly Repair): * 1 cup Cottage Cheese or Casein Shake

Supps: ZMA (Nightly sleep support)

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Coach Mark's Execution Notes:

- **The 10 AM Pivot:** Notice that by 10 AM, I already have roughly 60g of protein in my system. This prevents the "3-hour catabolic crash" and ensures the engine is fueled before the stress of the workday peaks.
- **Carb Timing:** My carbs are centered around my training and breakfast. If I am feeling more "carb sensitive" or looking to lean out faster, I simply reduce the rice portions in Meals 3 and 5, but I never touch the protein portions.
- **Consistency:** I don't reinvent the wheel. I eat these same core meals Monday through Friday. It removes "decision fatigue" and guarantees I hit my 215g target.
- **The 45-Minute Window:** Instead of worrying about expensive intra-workout drinks, focus on your Post-Workout Meal. Aim to consume a high-protein, moderate-carb meal within 45 minutes of finishing your session. This is the optimal window to move from a catabolic state back into an anabolic recovery state.

Convenience vs. Necessity: Use whey protein for convenience, not because it is "superior" to a steak. If you have the time to eat real food, do it. If you're at the office or in a rush, have the shake.

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CHARGE

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THE STARTING LINE

The information in this manual is now yours. You have the kinesiology, the protocols, the nutrition, and the data tracking. But knowledge without execution is just a heavy suitcase you're carrying around.

When I was 273 pounds, I had all this knowledge in my head, but I wasn't an athlete because I wasn't doing the work. The moment I became an athlete was the moment I stepped into the gym for those first 20 minutes and committed to the 60-Second Sharp Rule.

The Long Game

Remember, this isn't a "30-day challenge." We are building a high-performance machine that will carry you through your 40s, 50s, 60s, and beyond. There will be days when life is stressful, your knees ache, or you feel like the "spiral" is trying to pull you back down.

When those days come, look at your family. Look at your wife and your kids. Look at yourself in the mirror and remember that you are the steward of the only vehicle you will ever own on this side of heaven.

Your First Move

Don't wait for Monday. Don't wait for the "perfect" time.

- Calculate your 215 Rule (or your target weight) protein goal today.
- Print out the Prime Tracker.

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- Find Day 1 on the rotation and get to work.

I've shared my journey with you—from 273 lbs and depression to a 216 lb HYROX athlete with a six-pack. I am living proof that the principles in this book work. Now, it's your turn to write your story.

I'll see you at the finish line.

Stay Disciplined. Stay Natural. Live Like an Athlete.

Coach Mark

Founder of The Prime Standard



2026, Age 45, 216 lbs

**RECLAIM
YOUR BODY.
LOOK
YOUNGER.
FEEL
STRONGER.**

THE PRIME STANDARD

Founded by Coach Mark

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