

# Fitness to Practise. Train for your body type

with David Bretton

## Introduction

Despite what Thomas Jefferson said, all men are not actually created equal, and neither are women. We are all born with different body types, which have been determined by our genetics. By identifying and understanding your body type, this will allow you to train and eat appropriately to optimise your results and fast track your success.

If you bicep curl big weights and run lots you will achieve the dream body right? Unfortunately it is not so simple. In this article we will consider the major body types and how each body type may affect how we should train and diet for the best results.

## Body Types

While we don't fall into the same categories as dental impression material with regards to light, medium or heavy body, in the 1940s, William Herbert Sheldon, an American psychologist, did identify 3 basic body types. We are all a mixture of body types, although one body type usually dominates.

- Ectomorph: tall, thin, delicate frame, long limbs, little muscle/fat, narrow hips and clavicles, flat chest, small joints, fast metabolism
- Endomorph: round, soft body, shorter limbs, thick rib cage, excessive body fat, undeveloped muscle, wider hips, wider joints, slow metabolism
- Mesomorph: athletic, muscular and well-built, more mature appearance, rectangular shaped, thick skin, good metabolism

## Ectomorph

Ectomorphs can spend hours in the gym with few noticeable gains. Due to their high metabolism gaining fat and muscle can be difficult. Ectomorphs require high calories in order to gain weight, usually through regular

meals and larger portions.

These foods should still be healthy, 'clean' foods. Supplementation e.g. whey protein shakes can also be particularly important for this body type group.

Ectomorphs training should be based around compound exercises; these are multi-joint movements working several muscle groups at once. The squat for example is a very effective compound exercise. The squat engages the quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, calves, lower back and the core. Isolation exercises may also be used, but should be used in addition to the compound exercises, which should take up most of the workout.

Isolation exercises are where only one joint/muscle group are used e.g. bicep curl. Cardiovascular training should be kept to a minimum and ectomorphs may benefit from more rest days.

## Endomorph

Endomorphs generally have great difficulty in shifting their gut, with their body favouring fat storage. As a result endomorphs may need to take more care with their diet e.g. limiting carbohydrate intake.

The diet should also be tailored to help increase their metabolism e.g. drinking green tea, high protein diet and lots of water! Endomorphs may have a hard time achieving the physique they desire as they generally are aiming to 'gain muscle and lose fat'.

Commonly beginners with an endomorph physique will spend hours on the treadmill aiming to shed their fat and then spend the rest of their workout on isolation exercises aiming to build individual muscle groups.

Most endomorphs will benefit more undertaking high intensity compound exercise workouts – targeting both fat loss and muscle gain simultaneously.



## Mesomorphs

Mesomorphs are the genetically lucky ones, gifted with the ability to add muscle with ease. If they are motivated and disciplined enough they can become exceptional athletes.

Unfortunately some mesomorphs take their genetics for granted and have 'I don't need to workout' and 'I can eat what I want' attitude. We all hate those mesomorphs!

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it's important to consider your body type when looking to start an exercise programme; this may have a great impact on the sort of exercise, diet and supplementation regime you require to see the changes in your body you desire.

This is also a good reason to avoid generic exercise and diet plans! Whatever your body type you can achieve the body you desire as long as you are prepared to work hard for it – 'hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard'. ■