

## **Maintenance – The Minimalist/Maximalist Approach.....**

That about sums up my experience at maintenance over the course of the year. It's about finding the least time/effort required in the gym to keep the physique already sculpted by applying the intensity to make some progress.

The flip side is nutrition - finding the maximal amount of calories that can be consumed and yet be able to spend minimal time in the gym and spending the least effort at keeping weight in check.

### **Workout Routine:**

My workout routine was scaled back from 5 days a week of weight training down to 3. I toggled between the Monday – Wednesday – Friday standard workout days to the Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday workout days depending on how my schedule for the week was shaping up in regards to lifestyle commitments etc.

On my non workout days I would either take a leisurely walk after dinner or hop on my spinning bike in the basement and just crank out some music and more or less just process the days' events. This provided a nice relaxing outlet from work related stress and just helped me unwind.

### **Nutrition:**

After the last Open I pretty much decided I didn't want to be in a deficit all the time. With that being said and after listening to the Vince podcast I kind of had an AHA moment. Physique competitors seemed to be the best at changing their look within the shortest amount of time. What was their "secret"? They also always speak of eating "mini meals" throughout the day. I had tried this concept years ago when first trying to build muscle but could never really conform to the thought of eating every 3-4 hours so never really gave it an honest effort.

Maybe there was something to it – seems to work for the competitors. So I decided to increase my meals from basically one meal ESE style to the mini meals competitor style. I found that my total calories didn't seem to increase all that much (mental calculations as I don't track) maybe slightly but I found I wasn't as hungry going into the last meal by staggering mini meals through out the day. As well, my cravings seemed to diminish as well.

Normally while doing ESE style eating I would have my cheat day on Saturday after "banking" calories during the week in a deficit. This new way of eating I didn't "bank" any calories – ate pretty much what I wanted within the week and come the weekend where I normally couldn't wait to "eat up" – it was quite the opposite – I wasn't craving anything and just ate as I normally would during the week. Sure I attended tailgate parties but even with that it didn't seem to make much of a difference.

So I basically adopted the "maximalist/minimalist" approach to maintenance – the shortest time in the gym with maximal effort followed by the maximum amount of food (calories) I was able to consume with the minimalist effect on weight.

### **Scale/Weight:**

I've never really been one to be obsessed with scale numbers. The way I look and feel in clothes was always my first and obvious cue to either scale back if clothes felt snug or "hey... I'm feeling really good in these" when clothes fit looser.

With my new eating approach I found the weight (according to clothes) didn't seem to fluctuate as much meaning I could go for a few weeks where they felt loose and if they started to feel a bit snug then I would adjust accordingly which didn't mean a deficit as it would in the past – just small subtle changes.

These would be cutting back to two cookies for dessert rather than three - having only one slice of toast rather than two. These small changes weren't even noticeable and therefore there was no increase in cravings or that feeling after a deficit where you just want to eat everything in the kitchen without being able to stop. Those feelings I don't miss at all and it has been a year and I can honestly say that other than reflecting back to those days I haven't experienced those feelings at all.

So for me maintenance hasn't been about dropping scale numbers. In fact I pretty much stayed consistent with my weight +/- 3 pounds either way. At this stage of the game for me.....**It's all about obtaining/keeping "the look" with the least effort and not stressing over the scale numbers.**