21st Century Supersets

Supersets, The Old School Definition
- An advanced training method in which...
- two opposing exercises are performed, (agonist/antagonist or push/pull) one after the other,
- with little or no rest in between.

Redefining Supersets for the 21st Century
- The new definition is more fluid; now
- supersets can be done for the same muscle group
- or different muscle groups and they can include
- static exercise and even
- cardio intervals.

So What REALLY Defines a Superset?
- A superset features
- multiple sets of different combinations
- of high intensity exercises that are separated by
- little or no rest to
- burn calories, boost metabolism and increase hormonal levels to improve strength & performance.

Benefits of Supersets
- Save time
  - Less rest = better time mgmt
- Increase intensity
  - Improves fat metabolism
- Overload muscles
  - Increase strength & performance
- Make things interesting
  - Avoid boredom, plateaus
- Add some variety
  - There are infinite combination possibilities

Superset Rationale
- Recovery is muscle-specific
- Alternating agonist / antagonist keeps you moving while permitting longer rests between sets of the same exercise
  - Increases workloads used
  - Decreases total rest time
  - Accomplish more work or finish in less time
  - Both muscle and cardio-respiratory systems are trained
The Key to Successful Supersets

- Program for maximal or near-maximal intensity
- Incorporate mostly Multi-Joint / Compound Exercises
- Add, Complexes, Building Blocks and Circuits

Select Your Variables to Boost Superset Training Benefits

- Programming Variables
  - Sets & Repetitions
  - Intensity
  - Static vs Dynamic Contractions
  - Contractile Speed
  - Rest & Recovery

Programming Variables, Based on Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Sets</th>
<th>Reps</th>
<th>Intensity (% 1RM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>2 – 6</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertrophy</td>
<td>3 – 6</td>
<td>6 – 12</td>
<td>65 – 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>&gt;12</td>
<td>&lt; 65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Static vs Dynamic Contractions

- Use mostly Dynamic Exercises / Drills
  - Movement requires much energy
- Isometrics require little energy, but help in recovery strategies and build strength

Contractile Speed

- Speed and Loading influence muscle fiber recruitment patterns, neural drive, and muscle tension
  - Slow = Type 1
  - Moderate = Type 2A/B
  - Fast = Type 2B/A

Rest / Recovery

- Goals for Recovery
  - Encourage near maximum intensity in all lifts/exercises
  - Maintain calorie expenditure focus by avoiding prolonged rest
- Active vs Passive Rest
- Allow at least 48 hours between sessions
  - But not more than 72 hours rest

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Integrating Supersets into Training

- Add Supersets to:
  - Personal Training Sessions
  - Boot Camp Programs
  - Group fitness classes
  - Aquatics

Choose the Supersets that Work Best for You

1. Traditional Supersets
2. Evolving Supersets
3. Superset Circuits
4. Superset Building Blocks

1) Traditional Supersets

- Select 2 opposing exercises and alternate them with either NO rest or MINIMAL rest in between
- Strategic manipulation of rest intervals optimizes metabolic benefit
- Select mainly multi-joint exercises

Programming Traditional Supersets

- Option A: No Rest
  - Exercise A x 10 RM, No Rest
  - Exercise B x 10 RM, Rest 60 seconds...Repeat
- Option B: Full Rest
  - Exercise A x 10 RM, 30 sec Rest
  - Exercise B x 10 RM, 30 sec Rest

Functional vs Machine Supersets

- Exercise #1
  - Lunge to Press x 10 RM
- Exercise #2
  - Cable Chop x 10 R + L
- Exercise #3
  - Barbell Squats x 10 RM
- Exercise #4
  - Push-Ups x 10 RM

- Exercise #1
  - Leg Press x 10 RM
- Exercise #2
  - Seated Row x 10 RM
- Exercise #3
  - Chest Press x 10 RM
- Exercise #4
  - Leg Curl x 10 RM

Traditional Superset Examples

- Push-Pull
  - Upper Body Push
  - Upper Body Pull
    - Push-Ups + Seated Row
- Upper Push / Lower Pull
  - Upper Body Push
  - Lower Body Hip Dominant
    - Overhead Press + Semi-Straight Leg Dead Lift
- Upper Pull / Lower Push
  - Upper Body Pull
  - Lower Body Quad Dominant
    - Pull-Ups + Squats
2) Evolving Supersets

- Mix Intensities
  - Strength Range for Exercise A (ie 3 to 6 RM)
  - Endurance Range for Exercise B (15 to 25 RM)
- Pair Dynamic or Explosive with Static or Isometric
- Example A:
  - Box Jumps x 15 Reps
  - Bench Press x 5 Reps
- Example B:
  - Squats x 8 Reps
  - Plank x 30 sec

More Evolved Supersets

- Pair strength exercise with a cardiovascular exercise
  - Select cardiovascular training zones that target the lactic acid system (ie 30 sec to 3 minutes)
- Example A:
  - Pull-Ups x 12 Reps
  - Mountain climbers x 1 minute
- Example B:
  - Rowing Machine x 3 minutes
  - Leg Press x 10 Reps

Evolved Supersets (cont)

- Mix up Tempo’s
  - Exercise A as 3:1:1
  - Exercise B as 1:1:3
  - Eccentric : Pause : Concentric
- Example
  - Squats x 10 Reps
  - Triceps Dips x 10 Reps

Total Body Superset Workout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LB Knee Dominant 1</th>
<th>UB Vertical Pull</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Squat or Leg Press</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Pull-Ups/Downs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>UB Horizontal Push</td>
<td>Push-Ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>LB Hip Dominant 1</td>
<td>Lateral Lunge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>UB Horizontal Pull</td>
<td>Seated Cable Row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>LB Hip Dominant 2</td>
<td>Swiss Ball Leg Curl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>LB Knee Dominant 2</td>
<td>Knee Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>UB Vertical Press</td>
<td>Alternating OH Press</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Revolving Superset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th># Reps</th>
<th>Rest (sec)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 Push-Up</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 KB Swing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 Push-Up</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 KB Swing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 Push-Up</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 Squats</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 Ab Rollouts</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 Squats</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Alternate Number of Sets to Change the relationship of Rest Intervals
  - Exercise A1: 3 sets
  - Exercise A2: 2 sets
  - Exercise B1: 3 sets
  - Exercise B2: 2 sets

Training Density Superset Challenge

- Select two exercises and start with 12 RM Resistance
- Alternate exercises with little to no rest until you can only do 1 and 1
3) Superset Circuits

- Prepare 3 to 6 Stations
- Choose primarily multi-joint, “big-bang” exercises
- Exercises should complement each other
  - Push – Pull
  - Upper Body – Lower Body
  - Upper Body – Core – Lower Body

Progressing Superset Circuits

- Loading and rest intervals manipulated
  - 3 to 25+ Repetitions
- Incorporating Cardiovascular & Core Exercises
  - Run, Bike, Row
  - Direct Abdominal or Low Back Exercises

Superset Circuit #1
Lower Body Pull + Upper Body Push + Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station 1</th>
<th>Station 2</th>
<th>Station 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Body Hip Dominant Explosive</td>
<td>Upper Body Horizontal Push Dynamic Plank Push-Up</td>
<td>Hip Dominant + Core Dynamic Alternating Lunge with Twist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral Hops Over Step 20 Reps</td>
<td>10 Reps</td>
<td>20 Reps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 4</td>
<td>Station 5</td>
<td>Station 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Body Vertical Push Dynamic</td>
<td>Lower Body + Core Dynamic Bridge Marching</td>
<td>Upper Body Isolation Triceps Pressdown with Tubing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead Press 10 Reps</td>
<td>20 Reps</td>
<td>10 Reps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Superset Circuit #2
Lower Body Push + Upper Body Pull + Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station 1</th>
<th>Station 2</th>
<th>Station 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Body Quad Dominant Explosive</td>
<td>Upper Body Horizontal Pull Dynamic Tubing Row</td>
<td>Lower Body Quad Dominant Dynamic Alternating Lunge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squat Jumps 10 Reps</td>
<td>15 Reps</td>
<td>30 Reps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 4</td>
<td>Station 5</td>
<td>Station 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Body Vertical Pull Dynamic</td>
<td>Core Dynamic Side Plank Rotating</td>
<td>Upper Body Isolation Alternating Dumbbell Curls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull-Ups 5 Reps</td>
<td>20 Reps</td>
<td>10 Reps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Superset Circuit #3
Total Body Strength + Cardio + Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station 1</th>
<th>Station 2</th>
<th>Station 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardio, Quad Dominant</td>
<td>Core Dynamic Mountain Climbers</td>
<td>Upper Body Horizontal Push Explosive Med Ball Chest Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run 1/8 Mile (~1 min)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 4</td>
<td>Station 5</td>
<td>Station 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Body Horizontal Pull Dynamic</td>
<td>Hip Dominant, Core Dynamic Kettlebell Swing</td>
<td>Recovery Rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated Cable Row</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rest Strategies for Superset Circuits

- Rest between exercises
  - Constant
  - Variable
    - Change from Exercise to Exercise
    - Reduce or Increase
- Group vs Individual Session
4) Superset Building Blocks

- Select up to 6 exercises
- Choose a duration or intensity for each exercise
  - Repetitions or Time
- Add an exercise to each block
- Determine the Recovery Interval
  - Constant vs Variable
- Rest 30 sec to 3 minutes between blocks

Constructing Superset Building Blocks

- Example
  - Block 1
    - Exercise #1, Rest X sec
  - Block 2
    - Exercise #1 + 2, Rest X sec
  - Block 3
    - Exercise #1, 2, + 3, Rest X sec

Superset Building Blocks: Sample #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Tubing Chest Press</th>
<th>Tubing Decline Chest Press</th>
<th>Tricep Push-ups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Superset Building Blocks: Sample #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Lat Pull Downs</th>
<th>Inverted Pull ups</th>
<th>Assisted Chin ups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Superset Building Blocks: Sample #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>BB or DB Squats</th>
<th>Box Squats</th>
<th>Bulgarian Split Squats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>10 reps per side</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 reps</td>
<td>10 reps per side</td>
<td>10 reps per side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21st Century Supersets

- Pre-Exhaustion Supersets
- Post-Exhaustion Supersets
- Compound Superset
- Isolation Supersets
- Opposing Muscle Groups
- Staggered Supersets
- Tri-Sets
### 21st Century Supersets

- **Pre-Exhaustion Supersets**
  - Leg extensions & squats
  - Bicep curls & lat pulls

- **Post-Exhaustion Supersets**
  - Bench press & flies
  - Deadlifts & ham curls

- **Compound Superset**
  - Squats followed by lunges
  - Pull up & inverted pull ups

### More 21st Century Supersets

- **Isolation Supersets**
  - Dumbbell flyes & pec dec
  - Prone ham curls & standing ham curls

- **Opposing Muscle Groups**
  - Biceps curls & tricep kickbacks
  - Reverse flyes & pec dec

- **Staggered Supersets**
  - Lat pulls & crunches
  - Walking lunges & bicep curls

- **Tri-Sets**
  - Incline presses, decline presses & pushups
  - Lat pulls, inverted pull ups & horizontal rows

### Manipulating Your Variables

- **Exercise #1**
  - Dead Lift x 5 RM

- **Exercise #2**
  - DB Bench Press x 10RM

- **Exercise #3**
  - Seated Cable Row x 15 RM

- **Exercise #4**
  - Swiss Ball Leg Curl x 20 RM

- **Exercise #5**
  - Ab Wheel Rollouts x 25 RM

  *Use a constant Recovery Interval of 30 seconds*

### Hip Dominant Superset Block

- **Block 1:**
  - Skating Lunges 30 sec; Rest 30-45 sec

- **Block 2:**
  - Skating Lunges 30 sec
  - Squats 10 reps; Rest 60-75 sec

- **Block 3:**
  - Skating Lunges 30 sec
  - Squats 10 reps
  - SB Leg Curl 20 reps

### Abdominal Superset Block

- **Block 1:**
  - Full Body Ab Crunch 20 reps; Rest 30 sec

- **Block 2:**
  - Full Body Ab Crunch 20 reps
  - Leg Lifts 15 reps; Rest 45 sec

- **Block 3:**
  - Full Body Ab Crunch - 20 reps
  - Leg Lifts 15 reps
  - Sit-Ups x 10 reps

### Ultimate Ab / Glute Challenge

- **Block 1:**
  - Med Ball Slams x 15, Rest 30

- **Block 2:**
  - Med Ball Slams x 15
  - Ab Rollouts x 10, Rest 45

- **Block 3:**
  - Med Ball Slams x 15
  - Squats x 25 RM, Rest 75

- **Block 4:**
  - Med Ball Slams x 15
  - Ab Rollouts x 10 RM
  - Squats x 25
  - Bulgarian Squats x 25, Rest 90