

BLOG 45 - Knowledge of Results



Before you can change anything, you must first become aware of it. This is called feedback which means knowledge of results. How well you are doing in your training progress will be reflected in how your body is changing. Two practices are important here. The first is to keep a workout diary or journal where you write the exercises, weights, and repetitions, along with a food journal where you keep track of what and how much you eat and then look up the values. Keeping records of how you train and what you eat will give you the opportunity to compare this information to how you look.

In bodybuilding it's important to learn to see yourself as others see your body. Looking in the mirror is not enough; you see what you expect to see. Taking photographs is the best method to evaluate your progress and develop body awareness. I've done this in the past, especially when preparing for competition and even now when I have a distinct goal in mind that I'm training to reach. Every 3 to 4 weeks out comes the camera to give me proof of my progress. Seeing how your body is improving is the best ongoing motivation you can have to sustain your training drive.

With the advent of digital cameras keeping records of progress has become quite easy. You can use a tripod or have someone take your photos in relaxed front, side, and back positions and with hands on hips from the front, arms flexed from the front and back. Outdoors is best when the sun is at a 45-to-60-degree angle with the horizon so there are no distinct shadows on the body. I've always preferred 8 am to 10 am depending on the season. Try to duplicate the lighting conditions and use a plain background each time so you can get accurate comparisons.

Most people who train are only incidentally aware of their improvement. Their trousers may become loose around the waist, they may drop a few pounds on the scale, their friends may mention they look younger. But photos don't lie, and they should become part of the archives of your progress. Digital photos can be stored on CDs and last forever. You'll be glad you did this later, and these records will become valuable. Mine have.

The photos shown above were taken different years but I am using them to illustrate a point. Imagine they were taken weeks or months apart. See how I can compare what is happening from my training and diet?