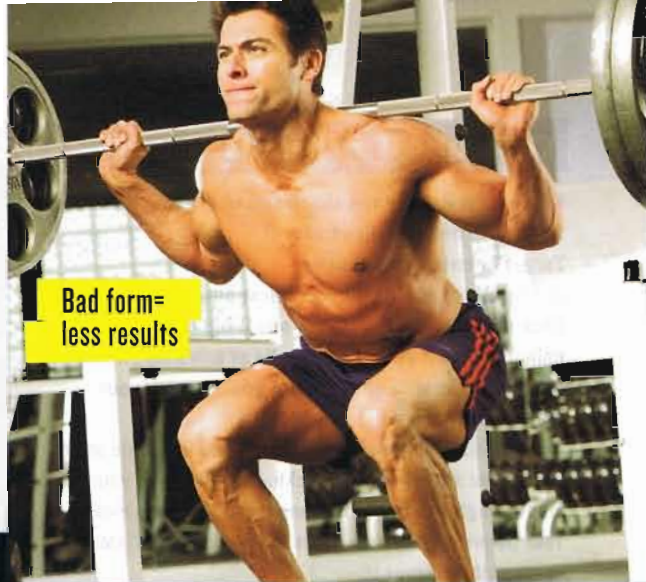


TAKE INJURIES OUT

Don't let bad habits in the gym get you down

YOU WANT TO give it your best in the gym, but it's hard to see success if you're laid up with injuries. From torn pecs to knee injuries, you can be one wrong move away from being immobile. Take this quiz to see if you know how to stay healthy. —Eric Butterman



QUESTIONS

1 You are giving it your all when you feel a sharp pain in your chest. You can tear a pec by:

- A. Flexing too much at the beach—karma doesn't like a show-off, brother
- B. Maxing out regularly on the bench press
- C. Doing controlled movements
- D. Hitting your pecs in the gym more than once a week

2 You love delt raises—it's the only shoulder exercise you do. But now your shoulder is in pain. Shoulder injuries might be caused by:

- A. Too much football with the boys
- B. Concentrating only on front delt movements
- C. Warming up properly
- D. All of the above

3 Collars are critical for:

- A. Most cardio machines
- B. Getting into certain bars and clubs—because we all know nothing says classy quite like Izod
- C. Avoiding a huge injury when having difficulty balancing the weight and, as a result, flipping the bar
- D. All of the above

4 Developing your lower back:

- A. Lowers your chances of an abs injury
- B. Lets you wear those half shirts that Rocky and Apollo were sporting in *Rocky III*
- C. Isn't necessary if you put in your lat time
- D. Gives you enough confidence to talk to your boss

5 You are doing your regular squat routine when you find yourself limping after your last set. Knee injuries can be caused by:

- A. Having bad form when doing squats
- B. Wearing the wrong shoes
- C. Hitting the treadmill to cool down
- D. Too much impact from doing walking lunges

ANSWERS

1 B and D. Jamo Nezzar, a personal trainer based in Los Angeles, doesn't believe in maxing out very often because of the risk of injury. He says that a three-rep scheme should be as low as you usually allow yourself to go.

2 B. Hitting only your front delts increases the risk of injury because the lack of balance makes your muscles vulnerable. Dan Eiden, a personal trainer based in Las Vegas, believes that part of the



reason for the imbalance is ego. "Guys don't want to be seen holding five-pound dumbbells for rear delt movements," he says, "but sometimes it's the routines with the smallest weights that give you the best results."

3 C. It only takes a 45-pound plate sliding off your bench press bar or—gasp!—your squat bar to put you in some serious, long-term pain.

4 A. Scott Jackson, a personal trainer based in Nevada City, California, stresses the importance of hitting the whole core but suggests the lower back, in particular, because it's the opposing muscle group, which can be key to developing your abs. "Many people want to avoid lower-back exercises, but it's important to get in dead lifts, and it doesn't have to be heavy weights," he says. "Hyperextensions also work."

5 A. Your back should be straight, your eyes looking up and your hips square with your knees when attempting squats. Or, you can ignore form if you're willing to get in the bench press position—that's usually how they have you on the surgical table. For more on squats, check out page 24.