

# Think Muscle Newsletter #1

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The Think Muscle Newsletter publishes the latest news and research on exercise physiology, dietary supplements, performance enhancement, lifestyle management, health & nutrition, and bodybuilding & fitness. The newsletter is dedicated to providing accurate and unbiased scientifically-based information.

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This is just a quick note to announce Mesomorphosis columnist Charles Staley's new book *The Science of Martial Arts Training*. Far from being only for martial artists, this book is filled with Charles' unique insights into training science based on his experiences with scores of elite athletes from a wide variety of sport disciplines. For more information, visit Charles' popular website at <http://www.myodynamics.com/>

This issue sponsored by Myodynamics.

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## **Evolution in Bodybuilding**

**By Bryan Haycock**

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Think Muscle is the culmination of years of evolution in bodybuilding. In the beginning, there was no science to pumping iron. You relied on tradition and sweat. You looked to those that came before you to learn the iron lifestyle. Even then, all they knew was that when they lifted a weight until their limbs gave out with fatigue and numbing pain, they would eventually grow stronger.

Today, things have changed. Bodybuilding has truly entered the information age with Think Muscle leading the way. Don't think for a minute that it has been an easy transition. This coming of age has been long in coming.

While in graduate school, I was often made light of because of my bodybuilding roots. Other physiologists simply couldn't understand the passion. Not only that, but they failed to realize that there is far more science involved with muscle growth and fat loss than there is with running on a treadmill.

Not long ago, the only exercise science you would find in medical journals involved aerobic exercise. After all, running *was* exercise, bodybuilding was not. It wasn't until the medical community accepted the fact that resistance exercise may have a role in health that money began to be awarded to researchers looking to investigate muscle growth.

I would like to say the rest is history, but that would be misleading. It wasn't until very recently that real quality research has been performed to unlock the mysteries of muscle growth. Of course bodybuilding isn't just about muscle growth, it is also about manipulating body fat. Thankfully, there are a few researchers that have shared a common passion with us and have conducted ingeniously crafted research uncovering the mechanisms of control of body fat stores.

Think Muscle is dedicated to sharing with our readers the very latest and most accurate information about all aspects of fitness, including sport performance, social issues as well as political issues surrounding our performance culture. Stay tuned for more of what you have come to love and expect from Think Muscle!

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## **The End of Mesomorphosis is Only the Beginning**

**By Millard Baker**

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*"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."*  
Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman.

In December 1999, Mesomorphosis, Inc. exhausted funding and laid off its entire staff of employees and writers. The company operates Mesomorphosis.com, an Internet media company focusing on bodybuilding, health and fitness. Volunteers have maintained the company's website since late last year. Mesomorphosis has struggled to remain afloat over the past few months and has spoken with several possible suitors in search of additional funding. However, the uncertainty of investing in a company with substantial debt against it and an unresolved lawsuit by the state attorney general has severely hurt its fund-raising efforts. Mesomorphosis' unlikely return to financial health has prompted the company to file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection as soon as possible.

The story of Mesomorphosis may not seem unusual in a year marked by the collapse of several ecommerce pioneers and cash-strapped dot-com businesses. In fact, most Internet media and content companies have reduced operations, undertaken cost-cutting measures and resorted to widespread layoffs to remain in business just long enough to acquire a last-minute cash infusion.

But I would like to tell you why Mesomorphosis *is* unique among dot-com companies and especially among bodybuilding publications.

- 1) **The Idea.** Mesomorphosis was based on a simple yet amazingly novel idea: providing accurate and unbiased information for educated readers seeking knowledge-in-depth on topics related to bodybuilding. We were not sure what type of business to build around it yet we were resolute in the idea behind Mesomorphosis. Mesomorphosis' primary reason for existence was not to sell dietary supplements as so many of its peers unapologetically do. Mesomorphosis' primary goal was to educate consumers and fitness enthusiasts by telling the truth.
- 2) **The Passion.** Making money was not the driving force behind Mesomorphosis. It was a passion for truth in bodybuilding publication. As the founder of Mesomorphosis, I am probably one of the few individuals involved in the net economy that has seen their net worth fall over the past few years. Four years ago, I dropped out of a prestigious doctoral program only two years away from completing my Ph.D. in clinical psychology. My wife and I sold our complete stock portfolio, consisting of companies such as Cisco, Intel, Microsoft, Altera and Applied Materials, in order to raise over \$100,000 in start-up capital for Mesomorphosis. Why? Because more than anything, pursuing our vision of educating consumers via the Internet was what we wanted to do with our lives. Even in retrospect, we'd do it all over again, maybe being a little more deliberate and concerned with corporate longevity, but nonetheless we'd do it again in a heartbeat. Unreasonable? Probably. Passionate? Undoubtedly so.

- 3) **The Revolution.** In today's materialistic society, the success of an idea is often defined in financial terms. However, examining the impact that the idea had on the existing landscape can more accurately assess success. As an Internet pioneer in the bodybuilding publishing industry, Mesomorphosis has had a vast influence over what readers have come to expect from a bodybuilding publication. Over 5,000,000 unique visitors have logged into the Mesomorphosis.com website. Even though Mesomorphosis has not published new content since January, the sequential growth in readers has continued unabated with the number of Mesomorphosis readers reaching an all-time high in June 2000. The demand for the high-quality and unbiased content that Mesomorphosis offers is unquestionable. Once individuals have had a taste of the truth, there is no going back. A success? Yes, a revolutionary success.
- 4) **The Plan.** Even though making money was not the primary impetus behind Mesomorphosis, the business plan *should* have and could have worked. Commitment to providing the truth does apparently have its costs. Mesomorphosis' coverage of anabolic-androgenic steroids and other performance enhancing substances in the same honest and truthful manner that it covered other bodybuilding topics made it a high-profile target for agencies that sought to suppress the truth that was contrary to the status quo. Mesomorphosis was only months away from profitability when the State of Texas initiated legal action against the company. Although formal charges have yet to be filed, twenty months of legal harassment by the Attorney General's office has effectively constrained Mesomorphosis' operational abilities and dwindled its available financial resources. It is unlikely that Mesomorphosis would have ever become financially insolvent if it were not for such governmental interference.
- 5) **The Future.** Several bodybuilding publishers from both the new and old economy have followed the Mesomorphosis saga. And these companies will make one of two conclusions regarding the fate of Mesomorphosis. There will be the naysayers who see the financial failure of Mesomorphosis as proof that publishing unbiased information does not offer a sustainable business model in the bodybuilding publishing industry. Inevitably, these naysayers will be the industry stalwarts who are rationalizing their dishonest and unscrupulous marketing of supplements under the guise of bodybuilding journalism. They will often admit that it is all about money. And for them, making money will justify the means of achieving it. Then, there will also be individuals and companies who are incredibly impressed by the high-quality content offered by Mesomorphosis over the past few years. They are the ones who see amazing potential in creating a business model based on truth in publication. Fortunately, these "unreasonable" individuals feel success can and will exist outside the traditional magazine-supplement catalog business model.

As the single most authoritative source of quality bodybuilding information on the Internet, the demise of Mesomorphosis has saddened many loyal readers. And few bodybuilding-related companies have published quality content reminiscent of what Mesomorphosis has offered in the past. However, I am pleased to announce that there are a few likely successors to Mesomorphosis on the horizon.

The most promising new media company is Think Muscle, led by my good friends and former Mesomorphosis colleagues, Bryan Haycock and Rehan Jalali. They have spent the

past few months developing a business plan and business infrastructure capable of supporting the overriding principle of truth in bodybuilding publication. The inaugural issue of the Think Muscle Newsletter (in which this essay appears) offers only a small preview of what is yet to come when Bryan and Rehan launch the Think Muscle website. The end of Mesomorphosis is only the beginning. Think Muscle represents the next step in the evolution of bodybuilding!

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## **Supplement Update: Coleus Forskohlii**

**by Rehan Jalali**

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This "power" herb has an active ingredient in it called forskolin. It has been used in ayurvedic medicine for many years. Forskolin's basic mechanism of action is that it increases the amount of cyclic AMP (adenosine monophosphate) in cells by activating an enzyme called adenylate cyclase. Cyclic AMP (cAMP) is one of the most important secondary messengers in the cell. It is considered to be one of the most important cell regulating compounds.

Under normal circumstances, cAMP forms by adenylate cyclase activation due to hormonal stimulation at the cell receptor site. However, forskolin seems to bypass this reaction and allows for an increase in intracellular cAMP to occur. Why is it important to increase cAMP levels? Well, there are several benefits of this to athletes including relaxation of the arteries and smooth muscles, lowering blood pressure, enhanced insulin secretion (which can help drive carbohydrates and protein into muscle cells for energy and recovery), increased thyroid hormone function (which can help enhance metabolic rate), and significantly increase lipolysis (fat burning). Forskolin also seems to benefit other cellular enzymes as well.

Forskolin is actually patented by the Sabinsa corporation under US patent 5,804,596 for enhancing lean body mass which is what many athletes and weight trainers are trying to accomplish.

The breakdown of fat for fuel (lipolysis) is actually regulated by cAMP. Forskolin has been shown to not only enhance lipolysis but it may also inhibit fat storage from occurring. This is very good news for individuals trying to lose bodyfat and get lean. Another way that forskolin may allow for fat loss to occur is by stimulating thyroid hormone production and release. Thyroid hormone controls metabolism and can enhance metabolic rate, which may translate into more fat loss.

One of the overlooked benefits of forskolin includes its stimulation of digestive enzymes, which can allow individuals to digest and assimilate their food better. It has been shown to increase nutrient absorption in the small intestine.

Forskolin has been shown to be safe and effective and has a great amount of potential as a sports supplement. As with most dietary supplements, more human research is needed but the future looks bright for this compound. The recommended dosage for this supplement is 8-10 mg of active forskolin (standardized from *coleus forskohlii*) two to three times daily.

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## **Do You Have an Eating Disorder? If You Are a Dedicated Bodybuilder, Some Shrinks Think You Do!**

**By Bryan Haycock**

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When you think of eating disorders you may typically think of anorexia (Def: Refusal to eat anything until you are extremely thin and malnourished) or bulimia (Def: Eat all you want then go in the bathroom and make yourself throw up until you are thin and

malnourished). Recently some Harvard docs have decided its time to define yet another eating disorder, a disorder specifically seen in one particular population, bodybuilders. You may have been aware that we bodybuilders have qualified on several criteria (DSM-IV) for eating disorders like anorexia or even bulimia. Certainly our preoccupation with food has led some researchers/therapists to think of us as having “issues” with food. Now they are sure we have a problem and want to help us by clearly defining it. They call this new type of eating disorder, “Eating Disorder, Bodybuilder-Type” or simply ED, BT.

According to the proposal by the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, ED, BT is characterized by “rigid adherence to a high-calorie, high-protein, low-fat diet that is consumed in the form of pre-prepared meals and supplements eaten at regularly scheduled intervals. Women with this disorder frequently refused to eat out at restaurants or at friends' houses because of their need to be certain that they were ingesting the precise amounts of calories, protein, fat and carbohydrates that they believed necessary to maintain their physique.”

These Harvard docs said that individuals with this disorder are known to routinely prepare all of their meals for the day in advance, packaging precisely measured quantities of specific foods (lean chicken or fish with steamed vegetables) in small containers to be consumed at prescribed hours throughout the day. They go further to report that if their eating routine was disrupted, individuals with ED, BT typically experience “intense anxiety”, and often engage in compensatory behaviors such as eating a protein bar to substitute for a missed meal.

Your probably thinking I made this up but I assure you, these people are dead serious about defining this new eating disorder. Here are the specific criteria used to identify an individual with ED, BT:

- (1) Refusal to maintain body fat at a healthy level (defined in women as the level necessary for normal menstrual cycles to take place) accompanied by a desire to maximize muscle mass.
- (2) Intense fear of gaining fat or losing muscle, even though body fat is below normal, as defined above, and degree of muscularity is far above average.
- (3) Strict adherence to a rigid diet with at least 2 of the following features:
  - (a) At least 5 meals per day, consumed on a regular schedule, for example every 3 hours.
  - (b) Meals all consist of high-calorie, high-protein, low-fat foods or food supplements.
  - (c) A significant amount of time and money is spent acquiring, preparing and eating these specialized meals.

(4) Disturbance in the way in which one's body composition is experienced or undue influence of body appearance on self-evaluation.

(5) Social and occupational opportunities are frequently given up because they interfere with the composition or timing of meals.

There you have it, the definition of this bizarre bodybuilding eating disorder. You would think that they would classify the eating habits the average sedentary overweight person as a disorder. After all, their eating habits lead to chronic disease and premature death. I don't know about you but I am proud to have this new eating disorder, *bodybuilder type* that is!

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## Reader Survey

### Tell Us What You Think?

1. *"Evolution in Bodybuilding" by Bryan Haycock*

It was good.

It was okay.

I didn't like it.

I'm not interested.

2. *The End of Mesomorphosis is Only the Beginning by Millard Baker*

It was good.

It was okay.

I didn't like it.

I'm not interested.

3. *Supplement Update: Coleus Forskohlii by Rehan Jalali*

It was good.

It was okay.

I didn't like it.

I'm not interested.

4. *Do You Have an Eating Disorder? by Bryan Haycock*

It was good.

It was okay.

I didn't like it.

I'm not interested.

5. *What type of articles would you like to see in the future? (Check all that apply.)*

Anabolic Steroids and Pharmaceuticals



- [ ] Anti-aging medicine
- [ ] Body Transformation
- [ ] Children's Health and Nutrition
- [ ] Competitive Bodybuilding
- [ ] Diet and Nutrition Reviews
- [ ] Dietary Supplements
- [ ] Exercise Physiology
- [ ] Fitness Competitions
- [ ] Fitness Psychology
- [ ] General Health Topics
- [ ] Lifestyle Management
- [ ] Men's Health
- [ ] Powerlifting
- [ ] Seniors Health Topics
- [ ] Sports Specific Training
- [ ] Women's Health and Nutrition

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We hope you have enjoyed the inaugural issue of the Think Muscle Newsletter. Suggestions? Comments? Questions? We'd love to hear them!

Best regards,

**The Think Muscle Editorial Staff**

**URL:** <http://www.thinkmuscle.com/>

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