

GET **BIG** RESULTS

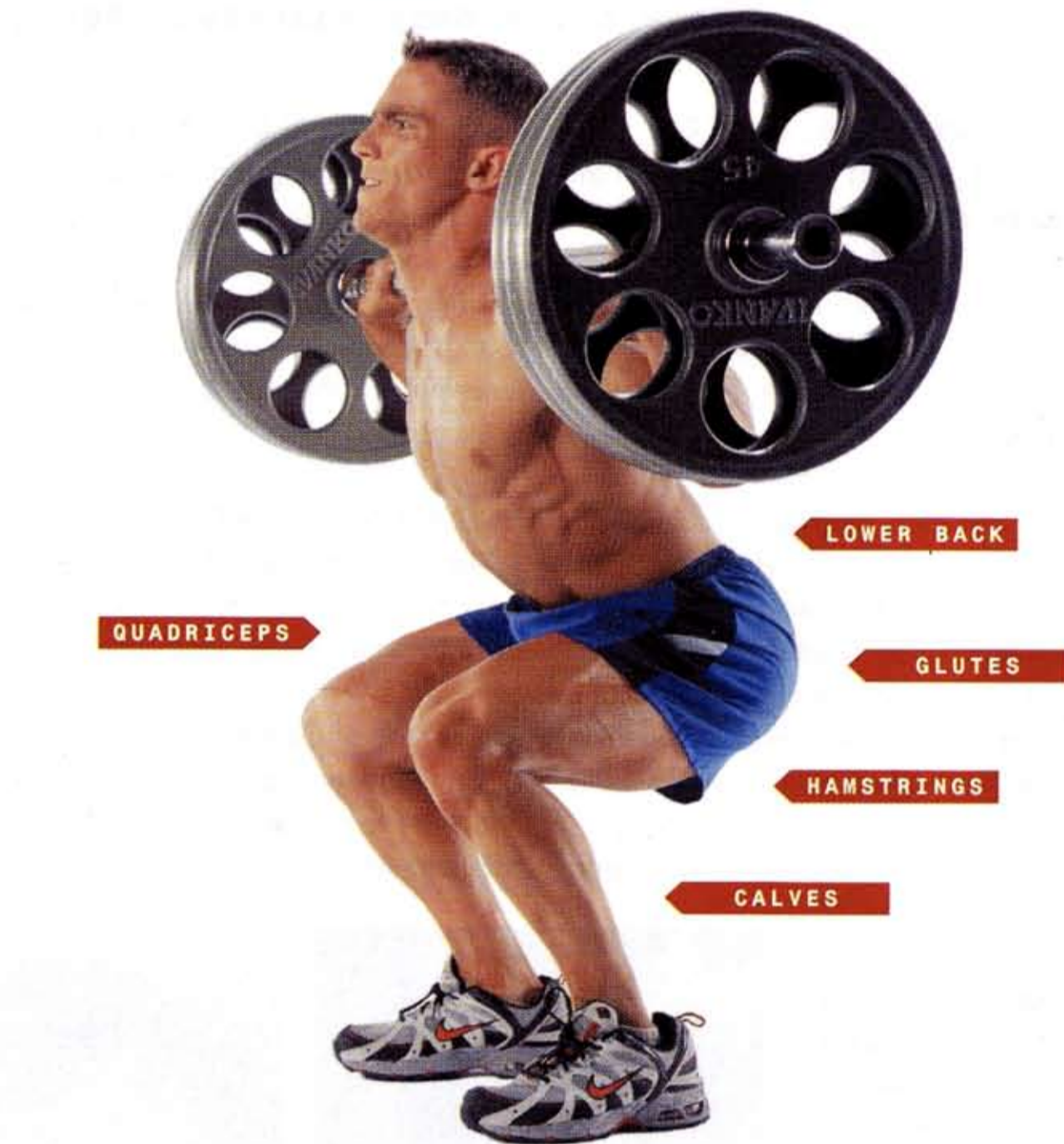
Use more muscles, get more muscles. Simple.

BY MARSHALL TULLY, CPT
FRUSTRATED BECAUSE you're not meeting your muscle-building goals despite months of curls, crunches, and cable crossovers? Walk over to the squat rack or chin-up bar and run your towel across it. See the thick layer of dust that came off? Maybe there's a connection.

Many guys avoid big power exercises because they're tough—mentally and physically. Unlike isolation movements, mastering proper form requires time, patience, and the willingness to push beyond your comfort zone. But if you want to pack some beef onto your skinny frame, you have to replace the isolation moves—like barbell curls—with old-school exercises like squats, deadlifts, pull-ups, and bench presses. A lesson in anatomy tells us why.

COMPOUND VS. ISOLATION

Compound exercises work several muscle groups and joints simultaneously, recruiting the largest muscle groups of the body—the upper and lower back, hamstrings, glutes, quadriceps, and pectorals—to move the heaviest loads. "Even on the most muscular athlete, the biceps represent less than one percent of the body's total skeletal muscle," says kinesiologist Sandi Danilowitz. That's why doing countless isolation sets for those relatively tiny muscles—biceps curls, triceps kick-backs, and ab crunches—will never add a significant amount of overall mass to your frame. Danilowitz adds, "There's a surge of growth hormone released when performing power movements like squats, and that stimulates growth



THE SQUAT: With feet shoulder width apart, slowly lower yourself. Once thighs are parallel to the floor, extend your legs and straighten your torso.

throughout the entire body—not just the legs."

Not convinced you can ditch the isolation moves? Look at the superhero physiques of Olympic gymnasts—the ones who perform routines on the rings. Aside from their massive backs and shoulders, these guys have arm development that rivals most competitive bodybuilders. Their training on the rings—essentially variations of the pull-up you can do in your own gym—provides enough indirect arm stimulation to produce grapefruit-sized biceps.

THE BIG THREE

Gym rats call the best mass-building compound movements "The Big Three." The classic **bench press** targets the chest, shoulders, and triceps; the **deadlift** blasts the lower back and hamstrings; and the **squat** works your lower back, glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings, and calf muscles. If you're a hardgainer, choosing the right exercises is crucial in your mission to put on muscle. It can be a lonely world over at the squat rack, but the results will soon speak for themselves. ■