

MIKE VALENTINO

www.MikeValentino.com

About Mike

Major Titles:

- 2002 N.P.C. National Championships, Light Heavyweight Champion
- 2000 N.P.C. USA Championships, Middleweight Champion
- 1996 N.P.C. Junior USA Championships, Middleweight and Overall Champion
- 1984 N.P.C. Collegiate National Championships, Light Heavyweight and Overall Champion

Birthdate:

February 15, 1963

Height:

5-6 ½

Contest Weight:

198

Off Season Weight:

215

Starts preparing for a contest 15 weeks out



I remember the first time I saw Mike Valentino onstage at the 2000 USA Championships. The middleweight class was already onstage as I entered the back of the auditorium and I remember being able to see the striations in one competitor's quads and hams from over 200 feet away. As I got closer, the rest of the picture filled in until I could see crazy detail...everywhere. Yep, Mike was simply peeled from head to toe, front to back, as he walked with the class and his third national title. Two years later, he went on to win his class at the Nationals and turn pro, giving him four national titles spanning 20 years of competing. He probably has the most detailed, methodical approach to achieving his trademark muscularity of any athlete that I've interviewed. And, most importantly, one look at "Mike V" tells you that it works. Take a look at Mike's blueprint for getting into crazy condition!

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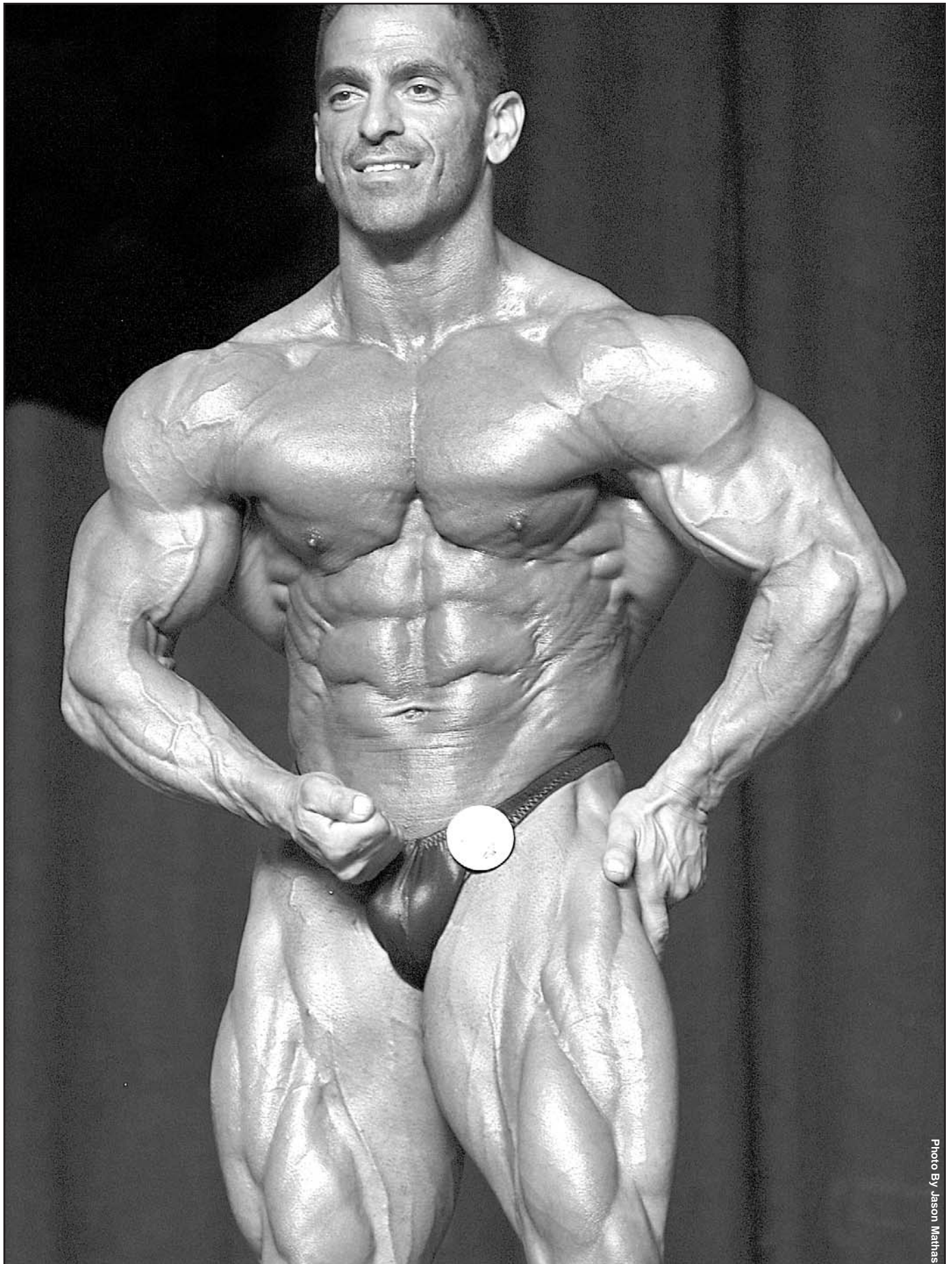


Photo By Jason Mathas

PreContest Training

Mike trains on a two day on/one day off rotating schedule as follows:

Day 1:	Chest, Delts, Abs
Day 2:	Back, Calves
Day 3:	OFF
Day 4:	Arms, Abs
Day 5:	Legs, Calves
Day 6:	OFF
Day 7:	Starts rotation over

Each bodypart gets the following number of working sets and reps:

	Sets	Rep Range
Chest:	9-12	6-12
Delts:	12-14	6-12
Back:	16	6-12
Biceps:	8-10	8-12
Triceps:	8-10	8-12
Hamstrings:	7-9	12-25
Quads:	8-12	12-25
Calves:	5	15-30
Abs:	4 supersets	to failure

- Mike feels that the bodypart that he is most often complimented on is his legs. Here is how he trains them for that shredded, detailed contest look:

Lying Leg Curls supersetted with Leg Extensions

Mike will do four supersets of these two movements by performing 25 reps of each on the first set, 20 on the second, 15 on the third and 12 on the last. The final set of every movement is a drop set where Mike will do 12 reps, and then drop the weight two more times to really exhaust the muscle.

Seated Leg Curls or Stiff Legged Deadlifts 3-4 sets of 10-15 reps

Single Leg Smith Machine Squats

Mike suffered a serious back injury some time ago, so this very intelligent bodybuilder uses a very unique approach to squatting. He will put a bench behind him and put one leg back on the bench. By using this one legged technique, he will actually use less total weight on the bar and put less stress on his back while achieving the same muscular stimulation in his quads. He does 4 sets of 30, 20, 15 and 12 reps.

Leg Press

If Mike did his Smith squats with one leg, he will perform leg presses with both legs. If he decided to do regular Smith squats with both legs, he will do his leg presses with one leg at a time. Either way, Mike will perform three sets here of 20, 15 and 12 reps.

Dumbbell Lunges

Mike prefers doing this movement with a step-back motion as opposed to the walking version of lunges. "I will grab the dumbbells and simply step back with one leg, do the reps and then switch legs. I find that this is easier on my knees than stepping forward or doing walking lunges." Mike will do three sets of 10-12 reps.

- Mike will do drop sets and/or rest pause sets on the last set or two of every exercise that he does for every bodypart.
- Mike's off-season training does not differ at all from how he trains for a contest.

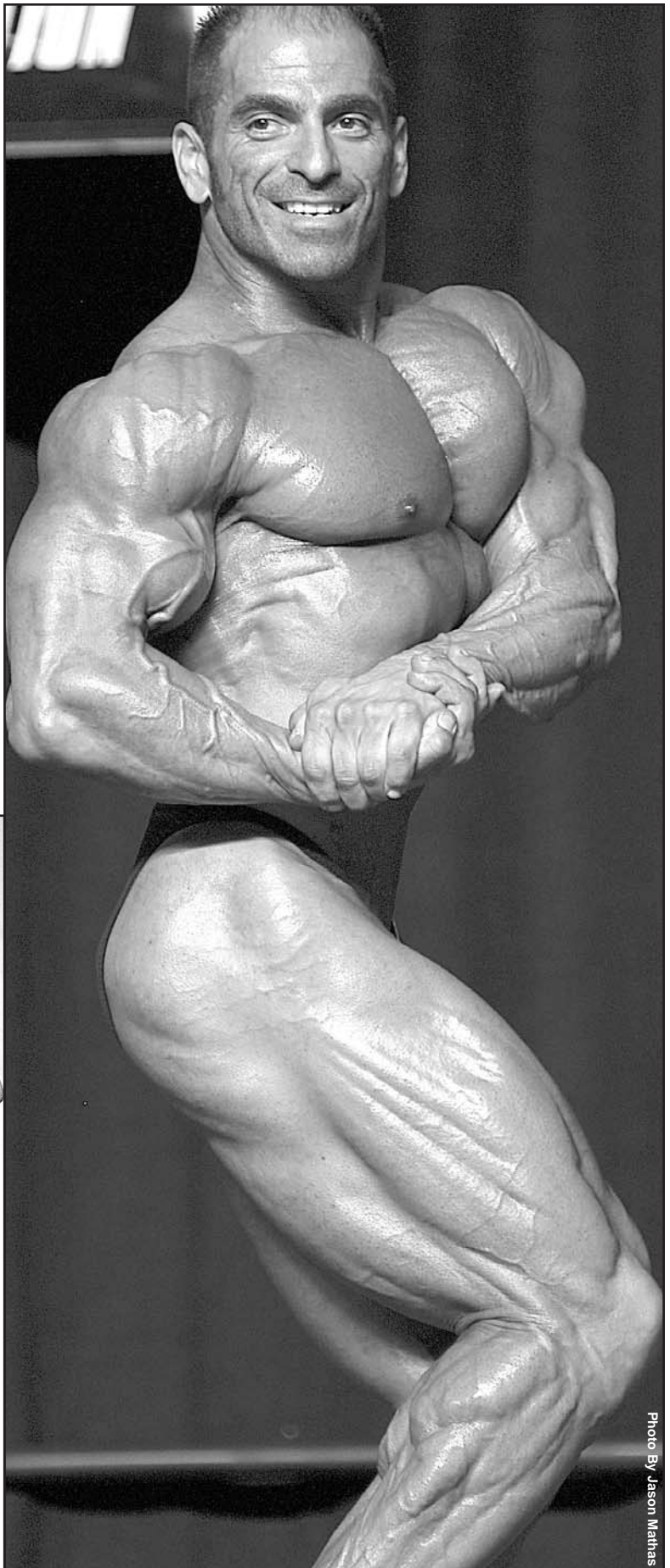
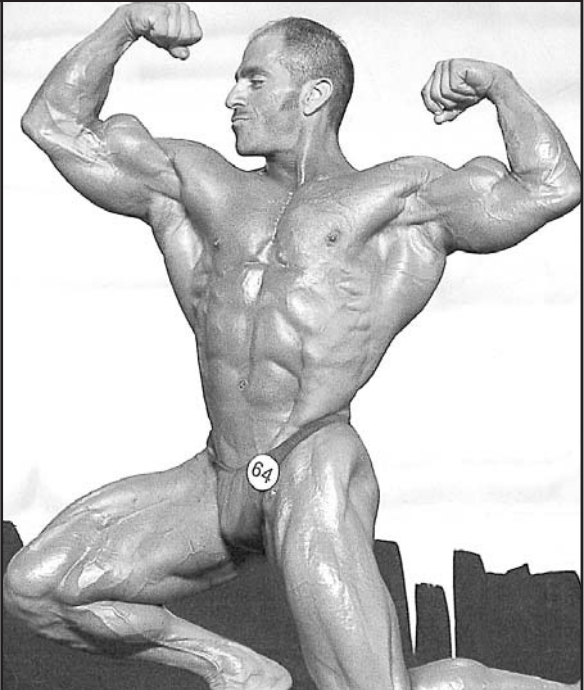


Photo By Jason Mathias

PreContest Cardio

Mike does 90% of his cardio on the treadmill at an incline between 4 and 8% and speeds that range from 2.9 to 3.7 miles per hour. He will do all his treadmill work hands-free. The other 10% of his cardio will be performed on the stationary bike or outside, depending on the weather.

Mike follows a very structured and detailed precontest cardio routine. Here's the breakdown:

Weeks Before Contest	Total Minutes of Cardio Per Week	
15	90	
14	140	
13	190	
12	240	
11	290	
10	360	
9	390	
8	420	
7	450	
6	450	
5	450	
4	450	
3	450	
2	450	

Last Week Before Show

Sunday	2 sessions, 30 minutes each, no incline, 3.0 MPH
Monday	2 sessions, 30 minutes each, no incline, 2.8 MPH
Tuesday	2 sessions, 25 minutes each, no incline, 2.8 MPH
Wednesday	2 sessions, 25 minutes each, no incline, 2.8 MPH
Thursday	2 sessions, 20 minutes each, no incline, 2.8 MPH
Friday	2 sessions, 15 minutes each, no incline, 2.8 MPH

- Mike does his cardio first thing in the morning in the early weeks of his contest prep. As the weekly cardio time increases, he will add a second session after his last meal and ultimately a third session in the middle of the day. He limits his cardio sessions to 30-35 minutes, performing as many as 15 sessions per week once his cardio hits 450 minutes per week. Unlike a lot of other bodybuilders who stop cardio a week before the show, Mike believes in doing cardio right into the show. "I feel that continuing the cardio helps my body to continue processing food, maintaining blood flow and getting rid of excess water. It works for me!" He does not do any cardio off-season.

PreContest Nutrition & Supplementation

From 15 Weeks Out to 10 Weeks Out:

Meal 1:

Meal Replacement Powder with extra scoop of protein added

Consists of:

75 grams of protein

20 grams of carbs

2-3 grams of fat

Grits or Oatmeal totaling 75 grams of carbs

Meal 2:

10 oz. of 95% Lean Ground Beef (pre-cooked weight)

8 oz. Sweet Potato (pre-cooked weight)

Meal 3:

Meal Replacement Powder with extra scoop of protein added

Consists of:

75 grams of protein

20 grams of carbs

2-3 grams of fat

2 cups of Rice Puffs Cereal

Meal 4:

Protein Drink consisting of 40-50 grams of protein and no carbs
(Mike drinks this while he is training)

Meal 5:

Meal Replacement Powder with extra scoop of protein added

Consists of:

75 grams of protein

20 grams of carbs

2-3 grams of fat

4 cups of Rice Puffs Cereal

Meal 6:

12 oz. Orange Roughy (pre-cooked weight)

8 oz. Broccoli, Cauliflower and Carrots

Meal 7:

10 Egg Whites and 1 Whole Egg

2 oz. of Turkey Breast (pre-cooked weight)

2 slices of Light Cheese

4 Corn Cakes

(not Rice Cakes, but they look the same but are made from corn)

Meal 8:

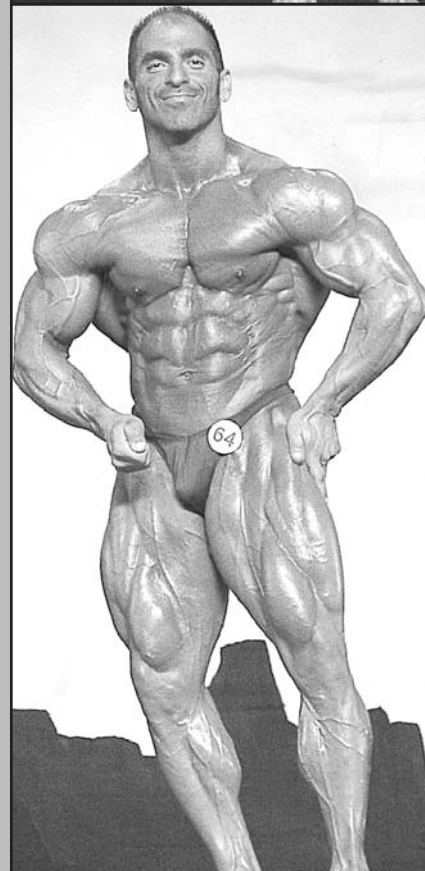
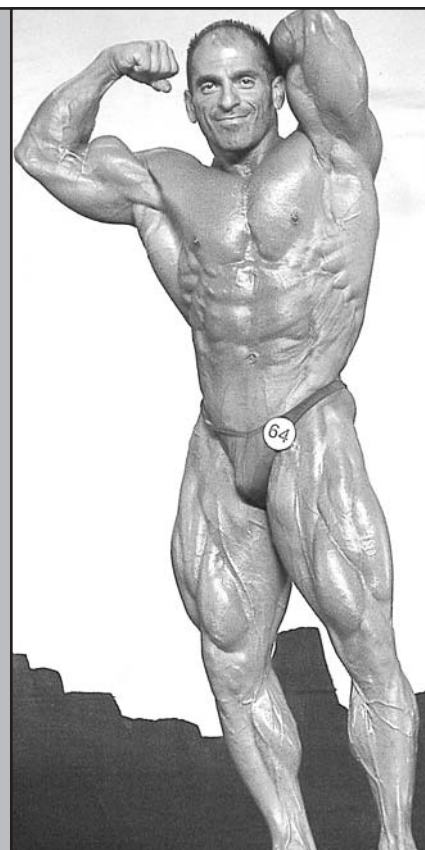
Meal Replacement Powder with extra scoop of protein added

Consists of:

75 grams of protein

20 grams of carbs

2-3 grams of fat



From 10 Weeks Out to 5 Weeks Out:

Mike changes a few things during the second five-week phase of his contest diet. He will now start to rotate higher and lower calorie weeks as follows:

10 weeks out:	Average of 3500 calories per day
9 weeks out:	Average of 3000 calories per day
8 weeks out:	Average of 3500 calories per day
7 weeks out:	Average of 3000 calories per day
6 weeks out:	Average of 3500 calories per day

- Note that these are averages. For example, on a higher calorie week where the average is 3500 calories per day, Mike may eat 3200 calories three days and 3800 calories on three other days. He will often eat higher calories on days when his energy expenditure is greater, such as leg days. On days when he doesn't train he will usually drop the calories lower, again because less calories are being expended. On a higher calorie day, he will add an extra 50 grams of carbs from grits to Meal 1 above and he will replace the 8 oz. of vegetables eaten at Meal 6 with 8 oz. of sweet potatoes (pre-cooked weight).

From 5 Weeks Out to 1 Week Out:

At this point, Mike's bodyfat is already extremely low. For example, he was within 3 pounds of his contest weight 5 weeks out from his pro card earning victory at the 2002 N.P.C. Nationals. So, he believes in raising his calories during this phase to actually grow into the show. Again, he will eat more on the days when his energy expenditure is higher and less when it is lower. Here's the breakdown:

5 weeks out:	Average of 3600 calories per day
4 weeks out:	Average of 3600 calories per day
3 weeks out:	Average of 3750 calories per day
2 weeks out:	Average of 3500 calories per day

Notes:

- Mike makes sure to eat 25% of his daily calories at the first meal of the day and 80% of his calories by the end of Meal 6, which he eats at 5 P.M.
- In terms of meal frequency, Mike will eat every 2 ½ hours.
- He drinks about 2 ½ to 3 gallons of fluid per day. Mike includes any and all fluids in this total, such as protein drinks.
- Mike does not take a cheat meal or a cheat day during the entire precontest phase.
- One trick Mike uses when dieting is to mix his Meal Replacement and his puffed rice cereal into a thick, pudding-like meal. He will sometimes add in cinnamon and equal for flavoring. "It's quick, easy and gets the job done. I live on that stuff."

Precontest Supplement List

- **Meal Replacement Powder**

- **Creatine**

15 grams on training days as follows:

5 grams pre-workout, post-workout and at bedtime

No creatine on non-training days

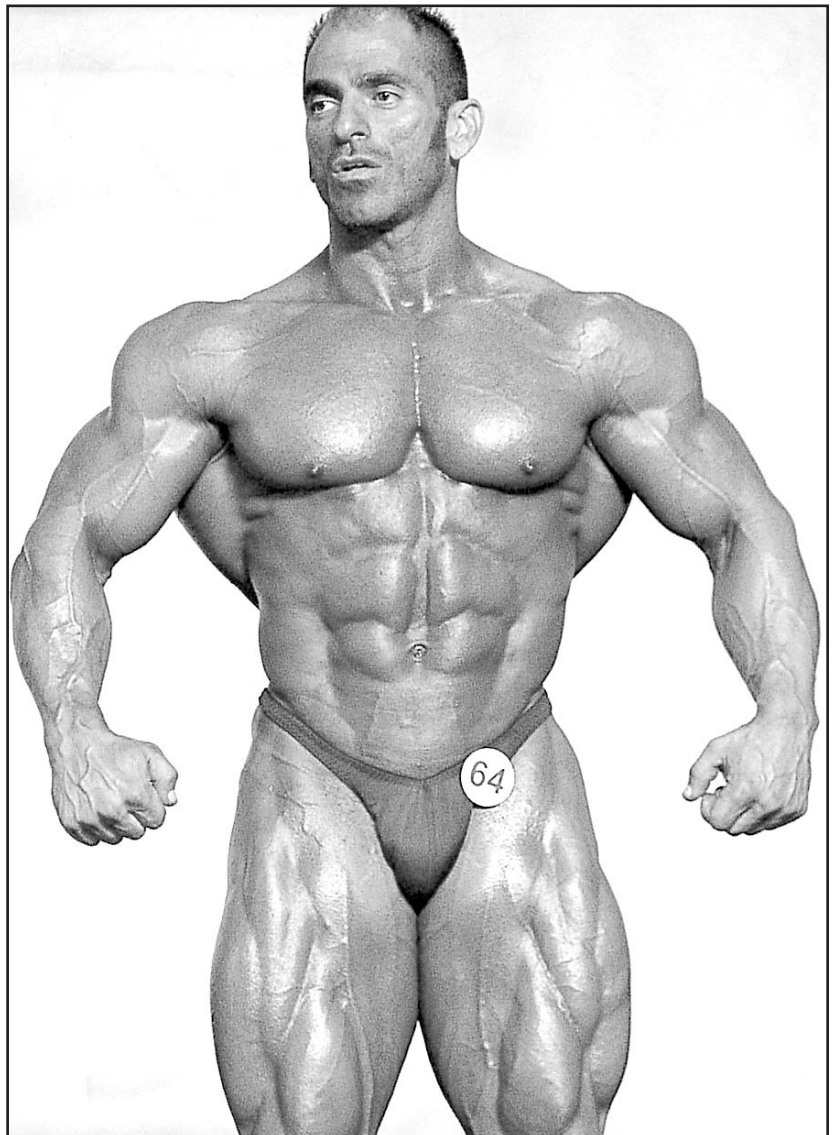
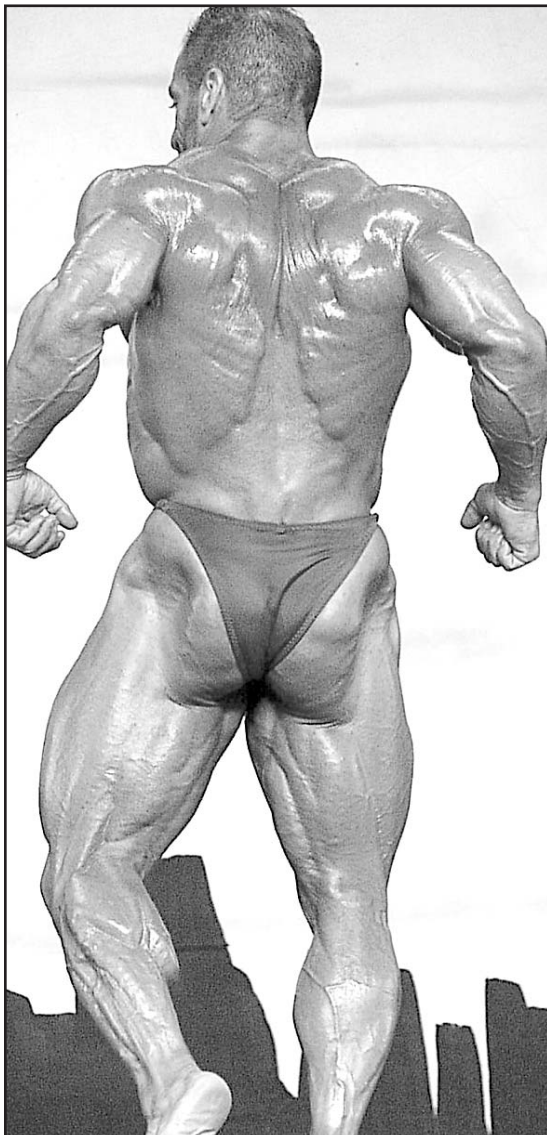
- **Glutamine**

20 grams on training days as follows:

5 grams at Meal 1, pre-workout, post-workout and at bedtime

10 grams on non-training days as follows:

5 grams when he wakes up and 5 grams at bedtime



The Last Week

Assumes Friday Night Prejudge

Food Intake

Mike's calories will stay around 3500 calories the final week, but he will manipulate his carbs and protein as follows:

Monday and Tuesday: Carbs drop 20% from 350 to 280 and 70 grams of protein are added to make up the calories.

Wednesday: Carbs go back to 350 and protein drops back to its original level.

Thursday and Friday: Protein drops 20% and carbs go up 20% to 420-440 grams. Divide total intake into 10 meals instead of usual 8 so that the food is easier to digest and process.

Water Intake

Mike does something very unique with his water that he says has always given him a totally dry, crisp level of conditioning. Here's how it works:

Saturday:	5 Gallons of Fluid
Sunday:	5 Gallons of Fluid
Monday:	5 Gallons of Fluid

Yes, you read that right. Mike will drink 5 gallons of fluid on these three days. He normally wakes up every day at about 201 pounds and goes to bed weighing 215! The next morning, he is back down to 201 again. "This is the hardest part of my contest preparation because I hardly get any sleep at all. I have to get up so many times to go to the bathroom throughout the night. It is very taxing."

Tuesday:	Mike goes back to his usual 2 ½ gallons of fluid
Wednesday:	1 ¾ gallons (80% of normal)
Thursday:	1 ¼ gallons (60% of normal)
Friday:	1 gallon
Mike is sipping all day and takes in 40 oz. of fluid before prejudging and 80 oz. of fluid after.	
Saturday:	Same as Friday

Mike also does what he calls a "Creatine Load" on the day of the show. He will take in 30 grams of creatine, mostly before prejudging, by having 6 servings of 5 grams.

Training and Cardio

Mike does his last leg workout on the Saturday before the show. He doesn't train on Sunday. The last week's training looks like this:

Monday:	Chest, Delts
Tuesday:	Back
Wednesday:	Mike will do what he does backstage to pump up. This is his last training before the show.

Mike's final week of cardio is outlined above in the Training and Cardio section.

The Finishing Touches

Posing

Mike really does not like to pose and never practices his posing routine. However, at 6 weeks out he will begin doing all the mandatory poses and holding them for a count of five seconds. He will do this for about 5 – 10 minutes every day.

Tanning

Mike will start tanning in a tanning bed a few times per week about 6-8 weeks before the contest. The last 30 days he will tan every day for about 20-30 minutes (whatever the normal time is for that type of tanning bed). The day before the show, he will tan for half of the normal time and even tans again on the day of the event, 12 hours before prejudging.

As for tanning products, here is Mike's regimen:

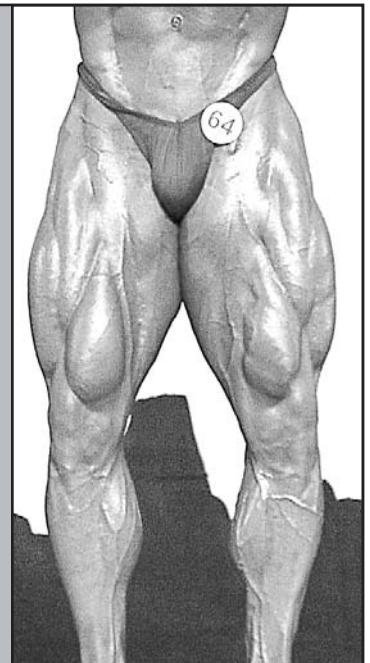
Wednesday night: 1 coat Dyoderm, 1 coat Pro Tan

Thursday morning: Shower, 1 coat Dyoderm, 1 coat Pro Tan

Thursday afternoon: Shower, shave

Thursday night: 1 coat Dyoderm, 1 coat Pro Tan

Friday morning: 1 coat Dyoderm, 1 coat Pro Tan



Backstage

Mike will use "Muscle Juice" posing oil backstage. He will stretch a lot, flex and do a couple of sets per bodypart to get ready for the battle. "I stretch in between almost every set I do in the gym and really believe in it. Backstage, I feel like I can get a pump just by stretching a lot, so that is definitely something a bit different that I do back there."

Flying

Mike will actually book connecting flights when traveling to a show to cut down on how long he will actually be inside the plane. He feels that this makes it less likely for him to hold water when he gets to the contest. He also makes sure to arrive at the contest city 48-60 hours before the prejudging.

Finish This Sentence...

The thing I like most about contest prep is...

"the strategic process of getting ripped and holding onto my muscle."

The thing I like least about contest prep is...

"cardio!"

The first thing I want to eat after a show is...

"egg yolks, bread and pancakes."

Another athlete whose conditioning I really admire is...

"Lee Labrada. He was dialed in every time."

The best condition I've ever been in was at the...

"2000 N.P.C. USA when I won the middleweights. That was the most shredded I've ever been. But, I think that the best overall package I've ever put on stage was at the 2002 N.P.C. Nationals when I turned pro."

What keeps you motivated, focused and disciplined?

"The number one thing is that I've been in this long enough to know that I don't want to ever walk away from a show knowing that I was the reason I lost. I've always wanted to shake the hand of the guy who beat me and know that I was shaking the hand of a better athlete."



Any Other Tips

"Make sure to burn more than take in or you will never get in shape. Stick with the basics of contest prep and get someone to help you who has a lot of experience until you really learn your physique. It's a good idea to record your contest preparations in a journal so that you can make good, sensible adjustments. It will really help you learn your body."

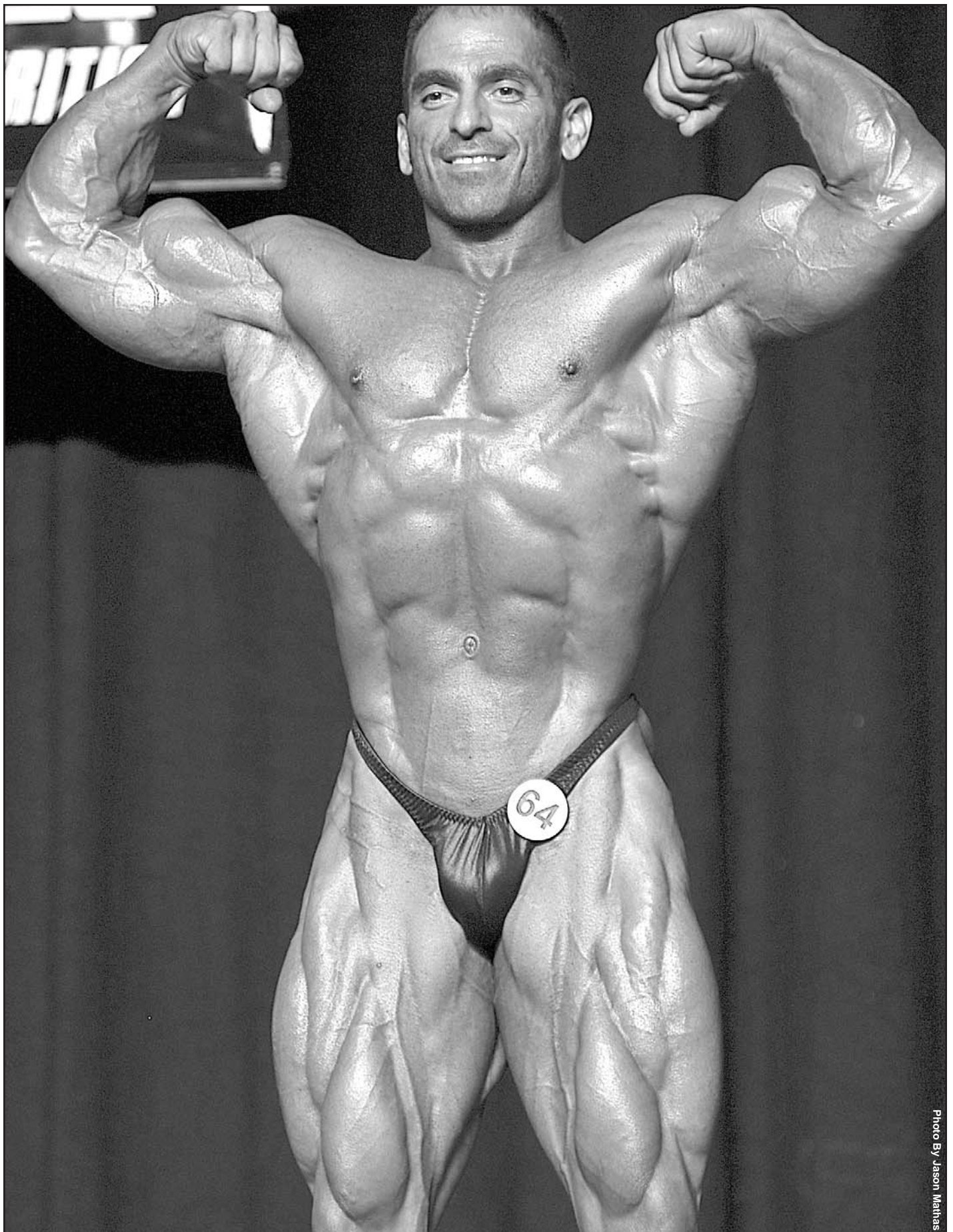


Photo By Jason Mathias