

## **MuscleMag International – August 1998**

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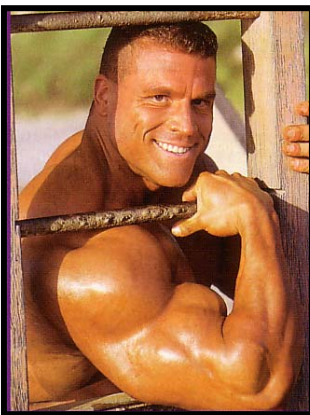
# **HUGE & FREAKY! THE GREG KOVACS SEMINAR**

**By: Dennis B. Weis**

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“He’s BIG!” This was the first collective comment of astonishment that rippled through the audience of nearly 100 as the HUGE & FREAKY Greg Kovacs literally walked sideways through the doorway and into the conference room at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Portland, Oregon to begin his information packed seminar on training, diet and posing. Greg’s incredible physique exuded a magnetism of stun power that pivoted all eyes in his direction.

After the audience recovered from the initial shock of seeing the largest pro bodybuilder in the world, the questions came out, one after another. If you know anything of Greg or have had the opportunity of attending his seminar, you will recall his speech patterns and recognize his bodybuilding and nutrition philosophies.



**GREG KOVACS:** I'm a little tired. I've just got in, but go ahead and ask me any questions you want on training and nutrition or anything like that. That's what I'm here for. [Frank Bohm Productions paid out some hefty bucks to fly Greg in from Ontario for the seminar and guest-posing exhibition at the 1997 NPC Northwest Bodybuilding Championships.]

**Q: How long have you been training?**

**GK:** I've been bodybuilding or training for the past 10 years. I got into serious bodybuilding about six years ago. Before that I was just lifting weights for sports. [Greg started training when he was 17 years old.]

**Q: I've heard that Muscle Tech has been developing and testing a new supplement called Anotesten. Can you tell us something about it?**



**GK:** I don't know that much about it yet because it is still pretty new. You're supposed to take it with Acetabolan, and it makes the Acetabolan that much more effective for releasing and keeping

testosterone elevated in the body for longer periods of time. Plus it has a few other things in it. I'm not really sure yet.

**Q: Can a person get Anotesten right now? Can you order it from MuscleTech?**

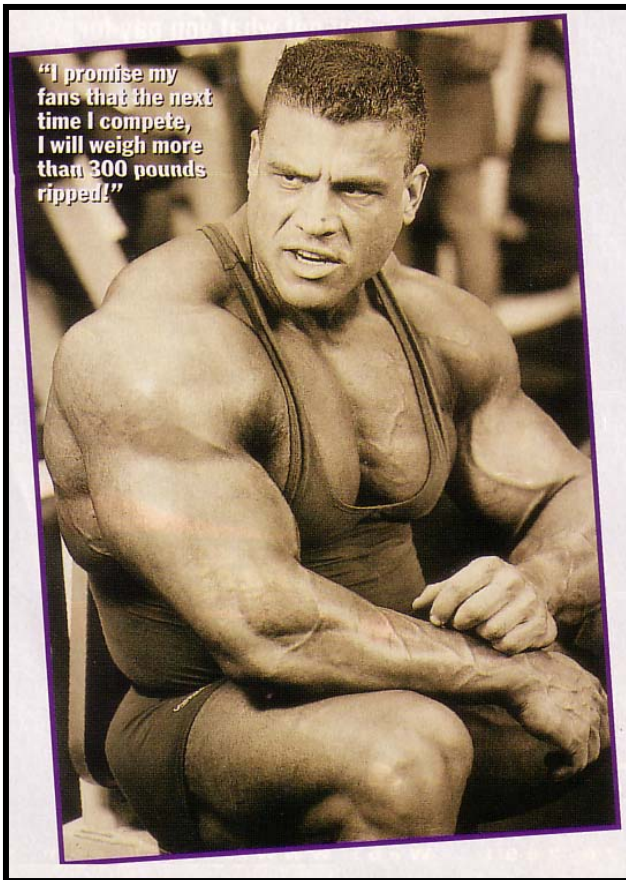
**GK:** Yes. Anotesten is available but it is very difficult to find. Selling it is illegal in Canada, and many health-food stores have banned it in the United States including GNC. Your best bet is to call MuscleTech direct at 1-800-246-3261 to order. Anotesten is an excellent testosterone-enhancing supplement. I recommend it to anyone who wants to gain muscle mass and strength.

**Q: What got you involved in serious bodybuilding?**

**GK:** I wanted to get bigger for hockey, but I got so big so fast I didn't want to play hockey anymore. Then one day I looked at a bodybuilding magazine and thought 'Wow, this is different.' But going onstage in underwear didn't really appeal to me. (Laughter from the audience). I continued to train hard and made fast gains.

**Q: What's your next competition?**

**GK:** I'm not sure. I will be taking some time off to gain more muscle mass and to refine my physique. What I can promise you is that when I do hit the stage, I will be bigger and more ripped than ever.



**Q: What's your bodyweight now, Greg?**

**GK:** About 350 to 355 pounds, I think.

**Q: What do you want to weigh for the upcoming contests in '98?**

**GK:** For the '97 Night of Champions I paid too much attention to my bodyweight, so from now on I'll go by the mirror and how I look. I'll be well over 300 pounds for sure.

**Q: Tell us about your training routine.**

**GK:** My training routine. Yeah, actually I train year round. I train just one bodypart a day and I divide my body into five parts. I usually train three days on/one day off. A bodypart usually takes me 45 minutes to train and that's about it. I usually keep my workout short and intense.

**Q: How much cardio do you do?**

**GK:** I usually do cardio about three times a week. I go back to the gym after working out with the heavy iron and do cardio for 30 to 35 minutes. I use the treadmill and the bike.

**Q: On your off-season training can you give me your three on/one-off schedule, including your compound and isolationary movements?**

**GK:** In the off-season for the chest I stick mostly with the basics like incline presses, flat barbell presses and dumbbell flies. As the show gets closer, I add different movements like cable crossovers to hit the chest from different angles.

**Q: Do you squat?**

**GK:** Squat! I quit squatting about four years ago. In my case it could be dangerous. Because of the amount of weight I used in squats, I could trip while stepping back with the weight.

**Q: Do you find better results with exercise machines?**

**GK:** Yeah, I get better results with the Smith machine because there's better control.

**Q: Have you ever thought about powerlifting?**

**GK:** People ask me that all the time. I've never been interested in doing only one rep. I just want to develop my physique. Doing heavy singles could be dangerous.

**Q: I've heard a lot of controversy about the barbell press behind the neck and the barbell military front press. What's your opinion of those exercises?**

**GK:** I used to do presses behind the neck every shoulder workout and they started to really hurt the rotator cuff in my shoulders. Pressing behind the neck puts you at a big mechanical disadvantage, so I've started doing them in front. That's a lot safer.

**Q: You think front-presses have an advantage over behind-the-neck presses?**

**GK:** Yeah, I find them better for overall shoulders.

**Q: How would you describe the training phases and how might you change them in the future?**

**GK:** In the future I would increase cardio as a show gets closer. Like, I'll start doing cardio, say, 14 weeks out, and twice a day instead of just once a day. It'll be every day instead of three times a week. My protein will stay about the same and the carbs will slowly go lower. I'll eliminate all dietary fat. Actually, I just started dieting last week. Starting really early, going down slowly, gradually

losing bodyweight in the form of fat, there's less chance of losing the muscle mass.

**Q: Do you take time off?**

**GK:** It just depends on how I feel. If I need to rest I take three or four days off sometimes, but usually not more than that. I've never taken a month off.

**Q: How many calories do you take in a day?**

**GK:** In the off-season my calories are around 10,000 right now. When I start dieting I'll cut 'em down to 8,000. As the show gets closer, they go down to 5,000 or 6,000.

**Q: How often do you eat? Every hour?**

**GK:** In the off-season its like, when I've finished one meal I already have to eat again. But I try to split the meals up to every two to two and a half hours if I can.

**Q: Do you believe in carb depletion?**

**GK:** You mean like depleting before a show? Oh yeah. If you eat more carbs than you need, your body will convert them to fat. In the off-season you take in more carbs just to gain bodyweight. Then if you cut your carbs you start burning more fat. At no time do I reduce my carbs to zero even for a day.

**Q: What's your protein-to-carb ratio?**

**GK:** Let's see. In the off-season it's 600 grams of protein a day to about 1000 grams of carbs. As the show gets closer I cut carbs.

**Q: What kind of protein do you eat?**

**GK:** I eat a lot of fish - just tuna though. I don't like any of the other fish. I eat lots of steak and chicken, and I use protein powder in drinks.

**Q: What protein powder do you use?**

**GK:** I use MESO-Tech because it contains more protein so I don't have to drink so much of it. It also contains a large amount of glutamine, which is necessary to maximize muscle growth.

**Q: Have you ever thought about entering a World's Strongest Man competition?**

**GK:** You need a lot of technique, and I think there's a big chance for injury in those competitions. I don't want to risk that. I just want to concentrate on the sport of bodybuilding.



**Q: How much can you bench press and behind-the-neck press?**

**GK:** At my strongest I can do free-weight incline barbell presses with 585 pounds for 6 to 8 reps with no spotter. I did 675 for 2 reps about a year or so ago, but I don't do that anymore. I did that just to see how strong I was. I do barbell front presses with 455 for reps and leg

presses with 20 wheels (45-pound plates) on each side for high reps, like 20. If you could see me train, you'd understand I don't train to lift the weight but to build the muscle. You'll see people trying to go heavy and needing to be spotted all the time. You risk injury that way. It's better to go with what you can do on your own.

**Q: Do you train by yourself?**

**GK:** Yeah. My wife, Kim spots me occasionally. So if I get stuck it's all over for me (audience laughs).



**Q: Greg, tell us a little about your Colossus! Video.**

**GK:** Muscle Tech made the video. It shows some of my training and also includes diet.

**Q: It's probably a little more training oriented than Dorian Yate's Blood and Guts video then? I don't know if you've seen his video.**

**GK:** Mine shows plenty of footage in the gym too, but I do some talking in it about diet. Dorian's video is just about training. He doesn't talk at all really. He growls.

**Q: I [Dennis B. Weis] do a lot of interviews with world-champion powerlifters, and the drift I get from them - and you may have answered this already - is that they wonder why you don't come out and challenge them at a contest. After all, you say you have incline benched 675 pounds for 2 reps. Ted Arcidi, who is a very good friend of mine, has done over 400 pounds for a triple in the behind-the-neck press. He wonders why you don't challenge him since you've done almost 100 pounds more in the same lift. There could probably be some big bucks to be made if such an event were promoted properly as a strength challenge. What's your take on this suggestion?**

**GK:** You know all the challenges I get from writer Steve Neece in his magazine columns. He's never talked to me. I've seen him so many times, but he won't even approach me in person. Magazine writers hide behind their pens. [DW: I refuse to hide behind my pen, and that is the reason I asked Greg the "challenge question" right then and there at the seminar.] I admit, there could be somebody stronger than me, but I don't dwell on that. I just lift heavy and if somebody else is stronger, so be it. When you're onstage, contest judges don't ask how much you can bench press anyway, so it doesn't really bother me.

**Q: How does your wife cope with your diet?**

**GK:** She cooks all the meals. If you get a routine going, meal preparation isn't too bad.

**Q: Can little guys like us ever get to your genetic potential?**

**GK:** I think you have your own limit genetically. Everybody's different. You should never compare yourself to other people. Just try to improve yourself and get as big as you can. But don't set limits!

**Q: Do you mind if I ask you a question about posing?**

**GK:** Shoot.

**Q: Diana Dennis [who conducted a seminar before Greg's] discussed music and posing, and I'm just curious what kind of music you pose to and how you choose it?**

**GK:** I think you should pose to music that fits your own personality and your physique. You don't want a huge guy posing to ballerina-type music. Fit the music to your posing style.

**Q: Do you work out early or do you wait till later?**

**GK:** Right now it just depends when I wake up, how I feel. If I wake up and eat and don't feel like going to the gym yet, I go back to sleep, wake up later, eat another meal, and then go train.

**Q: How do you split up your bodyparts?**

**GK:** I do chest one day, legs one day, back one day, shoulders one day, and arms one day.

**Q: Where do you put cardio in? Before your workout? Middle? End? Or at the end of the day?**

**GK:** It's better to do cardio after you train a bodypart, not before, because after you train your glycogen level is lower and you'll be more likely to burn bodyfat than carbs.

**Q: When you start work on a posing routine do you have a choreographer or take ballet to learn how to pose better?**

**GK:** I start working on my routine about 12 weeks out from the contest. I develop it gradually because I find about four weeks out I don't feel like moving, never mind practicing a posing routine. You should have it pretty well put together before that. As for a choreographer, I don't use one.

**Q: How do you divide your protein intake?**

**GK:** I go half solid protein and half powder. Carb powders I usually take after a workout just to replenish my glycogen.

**Q: Do you prefer high reps in your training?**



**GK:** For legs I do higher reps. For upper body I do 6 to 8 reps. I'm trying to improve my legs, and they seem to be responding better to higher reps.

**Q: What's your motivation? What motivates a guy to go to the extreme you do?**

**GK:** For me it's just to see how far I can take my physique.



**Q: You're strong too. You've done some pretty heavy lifts, so do you like the fact of being strong?**

**GK:** Yeah, it feels good to be strong. I always want to get better and better as I go on. My goal right now is physique development. I've just got my pro card.

**Q: Has Scott Abel or Charles Poliquin been instrumental in your bodybuilding career?**

**GK:** No. I've just pretty well learned things on my own throughout my bodybuilding.

**Q: What is a photo shoot like for, say, your arm article in the November '97 issue of Muscle & Fitness?**

**GK:** It's grueling. Some photographers will almost kill you. Like, Chris Lund will work you so hard - he'll make you use real weights (laughter from the audience). In fact I was doing dumbbell presses with 200-pounders and people thought they were fake but they weren't fake. They were real. Most photographers have never lifted a weight in their life so they don't understand that lifting weights for hours is tiring.

**Q: How many times a day do you eat?**

**GK:** In the off-season about eight times and then for a show if I get hungry I try to make the meals a little bigger and eat less often. About six times a day before a show.

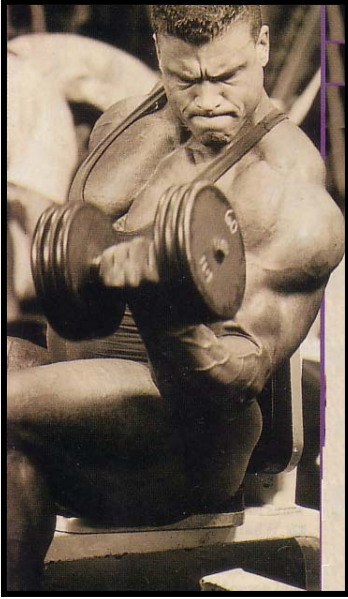
**Q: What do you eat in a day?**

**GK:** I eat one and a half pounds of lean ground beef, 30 ounces of baked potatoes, chicken breasts, and lots of rice, pasta or sometimes vegetables.

**Q: How much sleep do you get?**

**GK:** I usually get 10 hours a night and I take at least one or two naps during the day. So I sleep maybe 14 hours a day. All I do is eat and sleep, but when you're dieting for a show you tend to not sleep as much because you're always hungry and edgy.

**Q: What tips do you have for a guy who wants to get into competition but doesn't have a whole lot of time to prepare meals?**



**GK:** That's where your protein powders and meal replacements come in handy. Those you can shake up in a little container. My favorite is MESO-Tech. You can precook potatoes and eat them whole. I always try to have food handy, so whenever I go anywhere I carry a cooler full of food. (Audience laughs)

**Q: What do you look for in a protein drink?**

**GK:** I look for a good high-quality protein, like a whey protein with low carbs. I prefer eating carbs to drinking them. MESO-Tech is my favorite protein drink.

**Q: Do you want a protein drink that has lower calories also?**

**GK:** Yeah, like it doesn't have sugar. You don't want it with sugar. You want it just pure. No sugars or fats.

**Q: We've been reading a lot about mixing creatine and a high-carb drink. Is it better to do that between meals, or do you do it with meals, or...?**

**GK:** I usually take creatine with my meals because if I eat carbs my insulin level will go up anyways. That way you can take creatine with water. That's how I've been doing it. If you're dieting you can't use fruit juice anyways.

On the topic of creatine, there is a new supplement that has just hit the market called CELL-Tech. This product is far superior to creatine. It contains 200 percent more than any other brand, and it also contains the insulin-potentiating ingredient called lipoic acid. I am using CELL-Tech and it's truly amazing. It makes me bigger, stronger and leaner. If you can get your hands on it I would recommend you try it.

**Greg gave personal attention to everyone in the audience who had a question or concern. One thing is certain: Photos of this man do not do him justice. He looks much better in person than anyone can imagine. What a night! In my opinion Greg Kovacs will without a doubt become one of the greatest pro physique stars of all time by one day winning the big title of Mr. Olympia.**