

Bodybuilding Competition

All of the hard work you've put into a bodybuilding program will finally pay off when you **enter a bodybuilding competition**. Bodybuilding competitions are held at the local, regional, state, national and even international levels.

Bodybuilding competitions exist worldwide for both men and women. Bodybuilding competitions are divided into two main categories: **amateur** and **professional**.



So long as you possess a reasonable level of experience in bodybuilding, odds are good that you'll find a competition that is appropriate for your current level of muscular development, as many organizations offer a **novice** division and even a **juniors** division.

In addition, in order to advance to the professional bodybuilding level you must win specific competitions at the amateur level.

At the same time, not all bodybuilders immediately recognize why competing in a bodybuilding event is so beneficial. The main reason, aside from the **thrill** you'll receive by finally showing off the spoils of your hard work, is that competing will **improve your rate of bodybuilding progress**. By competing regularly, you'll be forced to mix up your training routines, in turn forcing your body to respond to a wide variety of muscle stimulus.

Another reason why competing improves your progress is **motivation**. After your first competition, you'll have a much better idea of where you stand in relation to other bodybuilders. If you fall short of winning this year, it will certainly motivate you to work even harder for the next competition. Fortunately, you'll **learn so much from your first competition** (how the judges respond to various poses, the specific criteria they're seeking, what your competitors have done to prepare) that you'll be much better equipped to train and compete the next time around.

How to Qualify for Specific Bodybuilding Tournaments

Qualification requirements differ from one bodybuilding competition to the next. The exact rules are decided upon by the **bodybuilding organization** hosting the event. In some competitions, you'll need to **qualify** in order to be eligible for the next competition in a series. Other competitions are open to all bodybuilders interested in performing and competing.

One example of a bodybuilding organization that implements qualifying competitions is the **IFBB**, or [International Federation of Bodybuilding and Fitness](#). The IFBB hosts the Mr. Olympia and Ms. International competitions, two of the most prestigious bodybuilding competitions in the world. In the IFBB Pro League, you'll find the **IFBB Pro Olympia Qualification Series**, which requires you to earn points based on your placement in initial competitions in order to qualify for later competitions. The better you do, the more likely you are to receive an invitation to the next event.

Although the IFBB Pro League is only intended for **professional bodybuilders**, the same organization contains a separate league for **amateurs** entitled the NPC, or [National Physique Committee](#). By competing in the NPC, you can eventually earn yourself an IFBB Pro Card which gives you access to professional bodybuilding events hosted by the IFBB, such as the Mr. Olympia competition.

Bodybuilding Competition Categories

Different bodybuilding organizations and competitions have **different formats and categories**. Some have "teenage" or "junior" divisions intended exclusively for teenagers. Some competitions also have a "novice" bracket designated for first-time contenders. However, all bodybuilding competitions are separated into **men's and women's divisions**. From here, these divisions are separated into **weight groups**, as follows:

Women's Division

- Bikini
- Fitness
- Figure
- Women's Physique
- Women's Bodybuilding:
 - **Lightweight**: under 114 pounds
 - **Middleweight**: 115 to 125 pounds
 - **Heavyweight**: over 125 pounds

Men's Division

- Men's Physique
- Men's Classic Physique



- **Bantamweight:** under 142 pounds
- **Lightweight:** 143 to 156 pounds
- **Middleweight:** 157 to 176 pounds
- **Light Heavyweight:** 177 to 198 pounds
- **Heavyweight:** over 198 pounds
- **Super Heavyweight:** over 198 pounds
- **Men's 212**

Bodybuilding Competition Poses

Posing is an extremely important aspect of a bodybuilding competition that's **too-often overlooked**, particularly by those entering a bodybuilding contest for the first time. All of the careful preparations you've completed prior to a bodybuilding competition (strength training, cardio, dieting, maximizing muscle definition, mass, strength and density) will be wasted, at least in part, if you don't understand how to properly hit the various poses. **A 200-pound bodybuilder, for example, can look like a 180-pound bodybuilder with improper posing**, just as a 180-pound bodybuilder can appear 200-pounds with excellent posing.

As a rule of thumb, you should practice your posing at least once each day for **10 weeks prior to the contest**. Doing so will not only help you to learn the poses and transition between them naturally, but also increase your motivation levels and remind you of why you're putting in all this hard work in the first place.

Remember, **posing in a competition is much more difficult than posing at home**. During the contest, you won't have a mirror, you'll be blinded by the stage lights, the temperature could exceed 100 degrees, and the judges may request that you hold each pose for up to **20 seconds**. Without the proper level of practice and conditioning, you'll end up shaking and cramping while you hit your poses. This will be unimpressive to the judges, but it's something you can fix easily simply by practicing ahead of time.

How a Bodybuilding Competition is Judged

Most bodybuilding competitions actually include two separate judging phases: a **prejudging event** and an **evening show**. The prejudging event is where most of the actual judging takes place, while the evening show includes some judging but is more focused on the spectacle of the competitors and the enjoyment of the audience.

Judges

Bodybuilding competitions are typically presided over by **five to nine judges**. The judges are typically a mix of males and females regardless of the gender of the competitors performing. In order to judge a bodybuilding competition, each judge must first be **evaluated and certified**.



The job of the judges is to **rank the competitors**. This takes place after each round. Each competitor receives a score for each round that is equivalent to their ranking for that round.

For example, a 1st place finish receives a score of 1 while a 6th place finish would receive a score of 6.

After all of the rounds have completed, the judges will add the scores together for each competitor. The competitor with the **lowest score** is declared the overall winner. As such, it's possible to lose some of the rounds (or even potentially all of the rounds) and still win the overall competition.

Prejudging

Prejudging typically takes place in the **morning**, and can be thought of as a rehearsal for the show that will occur later in the evening. However, despite this "rehearsal" status, it's very important to take the prejudging event seriously because this is when the judges will likely decide who is to win the competition. Maintaining focus in the prejudging event is easier than in the evening show because there will be no audience to distract you and the judges.

Remember that properly preparing for a bodybuilding competition takes time, not only because of the changes that you must force on your body (hitting your target competition weight while maximizing muscle definition and retaining muscle mass, strength and density), but also because of the time required to create and thoroughly practice a posing routine.

If you've never entered a bodybuilding competition before, consider attending the first one as a **member of the audience** rather than as a competitor. Doing so will allow you to simply observe the process and flow of the bodybuilding competition. You'll see the level of muscular development achieved by the competitors, as well as how they perform their posing routines. You'll also see what it takes to win the competition, and what types of mistakes send a competitor to the bottom of the rankings. Finally, you'll experience the **overall atmosphere of the competition**, which will help you to decide whether competitive bodybuilding is for you.



As is evident, to excel on the world stage of body building takes years of hard work, focus, and dedication. In addition, there are several aspects of body building that you will need to simultaneously focus on.

For example, defining your workout routine and continually modifying it to maximize your muscular gains, consuming a diet that supports and promotes muscular development, receiving enough rest to allow your muscle tissue to develop, and supplementing your diet to promote an even greater rate in which you develop muscle tissue and density, to name a few.