

# SAVA

## HANDBOOK

# WELCOME

We are thrilled to have you as part of Team Saga. Your decision to join us marks the beginning of an exciting journey that aims to foster excellence in all its facets. Remember, pressure creates diamonds, and it is in this ethos that we shape our culture.

As a team, we are relentlessly committed to the pursuit of quality. Our coaches go beyond just focusing on physical outcomes; they continually strive to integrate innovative and scientific approaches to boost both your physical and mental health and performance. The positive habits you're about to cultivate here will leave a lasting impact on your journey.

Your success is our topmost priority, and while we guarantee a high level of effort, time, and communication from our side, we believe that success is a two-way street. Therefore, we expect a similar level of commitment and energy from you.

Ready to elevate yourself? Let's get to work! Welcome to the Team Saga family.

OWNER & HEAD COACH

SEAN IRWIN



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Believe in the Journey:** Achieving your fitness goals requires patience, consistent effort, and a long-term commitment.
- **Maintain Open Communication:** Providing thorough and honest feedback is crucial to adjust your program accurately and address any issues. Without a clear understanding of your situation, we can't tailor appropriate programming/protocols.
- **Dedicated to Excellence:** We leverage our extensive experience in specialized weight training to provide superior guidance. We demand exceptional effort and concentration during each gym session.
- **Timely Check-ins:** Given the volume of athletes and our commitment to quality, we expect thorough check-ins, submitted promptly as requested. We won't follow up if they aren't turned in on time.
- **Adherence to the Program:** All aspects of the program, including but not limited to nutrition, supplementation, water/sodium intake, cardio/activity, and biofeedback recordings, must be followed strictly.
- **Access to Program Document:** A separate spreadsheet detailing all programming aspects will be sent to you. It's best viewed on a desktop or tablet. If using a smartphone, turn it sideways for optimal viewing. You'll find various sections under tabs at the bottom of the sheet.





# GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Response Time:** Please allow up to 48 hours for a response on any platform. If you don't receive a reply within this time, check your "junk" mail or reach out again.
- **Contest preparation** doesn't always go according to plan. Unexpected health challenges and obstacles can arise, which can shift the course of your journey. As an athlete, it's crucial to stay committed to your goals, while also being adaptable and receptive to feedback. If your coach decides to temporarily halt your prep, understand that it's neither your fault nor theirs. Such decisions are made considering the bigger picture, prioritizing not only your competitiveness but also your long-term health. Remember, bodybuilding is a marathon, not a sprint. Always prioritize your well-being.
- **Competition Expenses:** If you're a competitor wanting your coach to attend or be backstage at your event, be prepared to cover travel and entry costs.
- **Engage on Social Media:** Tag @sagacoaching and your coach in your fitness-related Instagram posts, and use #TeamSaga in your bio. This helps us broaden our positive influence!
- **Brand Recommendations:** Some recommended supplements, items, and services may be brand-specific. You'll find discount codes for these on your program.





# NUTRITION

- Please adjust your "pre-workout" and "post-workout" meals according to your exercise regimen. For clarity, "pre-workout" meals should be consumed 90-120 minutes before training. On non-training days, continue following the meal sequence as usual.
- Try to space your meals 2.5-5 hours apart as per your convenience.
- Measure all meats and vegetables before cooking. However, rice and potatoes should be measured after cooking. Dry measure oats and cream of rice. Oils should not be used in cooking; instead, drizzle them over cooked food.
- For those on a meal plan, here is a list of acceptable "vegetables of choice", the weight of which remains constant: Spinach, Romaine lettuce, Cucumbers, Mushrooms, Scallions, Asparagus, Green beans, Zucchini, Cabbage, and Bell peppers.
- Ensure meals are spaced at least 2.5-3 hours apart. Take time to chew your food thoroughly and eat in a relaxed setting.
- You may use zero-calorie condiments, seasonings, and drinks, but only in tight moderation.





# NUTRITION

- Regularly sprinkle a light amount of iodized salt onto your food. You might have specific salt measurements on your plan.
- All beverages consumed are included in your daily water intake calculation.
- For those following IIFYM/Flexible Dieting: Daily allowances for protein and carbs can deviate by +/- 10g, while fat and fiber can deviate by +/- 5g. Use apps like MyFitnessPal for accurate tracking of your food intake. These apps offer extensive food databases, restaurant menus, and barcode scanning. Utilize a food scale for precision when cooking at home. Every calorie-containing item consumed should be tracked and measured.
- Maintain a daily caffeine intake that does not exceed 200mg.
- Ensure that you chew your food well and consume meals in peaceful settings.





# CARDIO

- While using cardio equipment, avoid leaning your body weight onto the hand railing. Use a light grip solely for balance maintenance.
- Cardio exercises planned in your program can be performed at any time, with the exception of immediately prior to a training session.
- Your plan might incorporate a daily step count target. Utilize a step-tracking device to monitor and achieve this goal.





# TRAINING

- As part of your responsibilities, regularly communicate your progress or any issues you encounter to your coach on a weekly basis.
- Approved lifting equipment includes:
  - Belts (recommended)
  - Knee and elbow sleeves (only if necessary)
  - Versa Gripps or straps (recommended)
- Disallowed lifting equipment includes:
  - Waist trainers
  - Knee wraps
- Your training split may include "A" and "B" days. While the structure of these days may differ or be identical, the choice of exercises should vary, ensuring movement diversity to minimize injury risk.
- If you're uncertain about how to execute an exercise, refer to YouTube for guidance, or ask your coach for further instruction. Please include video recordings of any exercises you're unsure about in your check-in submissions for evaluation.
- Feel free to adjust rest days within your training rotation as your schedule demands.





# POSING

- The quality of your presentation plays a crucial role not only in your potential placement at the show but also in effectively showcasing the hard work you have dedicated to your goals.
- Upon receiving this document, it is expected that you prioritize practicing posing for your specific division, dedicating at least 10-20 minutes per day. This applies to both the off-season/improvement phase and in-season athletes. The aim is for posing to become second nature by the time you step on stage, allowing you to execute with confidence and without overthinking. Regular practice also helps build the necessary endurance to hold poses for extended periods, similar to maintaining the stillness of a statue during comparisons.
- Posing is an integral part of the process that should not be overlooked or rushed. It is highly recommended to allocate resources and budget for working with a posing coach consistently throughout your journey. Please reach out to us for guidance in finding the right coach to assist you.
- If, as you near the end of your prep, your posing and presentation are not up to the desired standard, adjustments to your stage appearance timeline may be necessary.





# SLEEP

- Consistency in sleep-wake patterns is essential for regulating the secretion of adrenal and circadian hormones. It is ideal to wake up and go to bed at approximately the same time every day, or as close to it as possible. Unless there are schedule constraints, it is recommended to be in bed between 9 pm and 12 am. If you have a habit of staying up much later, it is advisable to gradually adjust your bedtime by moving it back about 30 minutes every few days.





# CHECK INS

- To ensure effective communication and provide high-quality service, we kindly request that you download the "WhatsApp" application on your smartphone. This will be our primary platform for check-ins, questions, feedback, and other related matters.
- At Saga Coaching, we take pride in our dedicated community of athletes and strive to maintain a consistent level of service. To ensure fairness to all committed individuals on our team, we have established the following guidelines:
- Your check-in day will be determined by your coach upon receiving your plan. If the assigned day does not work for you, please reach out to us for adjustments.
- Checking in is your responsibility, and it is important to submit your check-ins every week before 11 am (CST), unless otherwise specified by your coach. Due to the volume of athletes we work with, we require check-ins during these time frames. You will have two opportunities for late check-ins before facing possible removal from the athlete roster. This policy is in place to ensure fairness to all athletes.





# CHECK INS

- If you have not received a reply to your check-in within 48 hours, please resend it and contact your coach directly. There might be a technical issue that needs attention.
- Check-in feedback should be submitted on the first two tabs of your programming spreadsheet on every check-in day. Please share check-in pictures and training videos via WhatsApp. If you have additional feedback, feel free to message Sean through WhatsApp along with your pictures and videos.
- **FOR IN-SEASON BODYBUILDING COMPETITORS:** Strict adherence to the program is mandatory, including diet, supplementation, training, cardio, water intake, etc. We have implemented a strike system for failed adherence:
  - 1st Strike: We will work with you to develop a more sustainable program and address any external factors that might affect your ability to follow the plan. We will also discuss your commitment to the planned contest.
  - 2nd Strike: You may be required to reschedule your planned contest to a later date in the season.
  - 3rd Strike: You may be asked to sit out of the current competitive season.





# CHECK INS

- Recording daily weights is essential and should be done every morning on a digital body weight scale, after using the restroom and without clothing.
- For fasting blood glucose (FBG), please record it at least three times per week upon waking. Make sure to drink at least 16 oz of water and refrain from consuming anything else before taking the measurement. You can find relatively affordable glucose monitors on Amazon or at local drug stores.
- Male athletes must record blood pressure in a fasted state at least three times per week. Ensure that your blood pressure monitor cuff is the appropriate size for your arm, and perform the measurement in a calm environment.
- Check-in pictures, including full body shots, are required. For competitors, please include pictures of all mandatory poses for your respective division. If your division has more than six mandatory poses, include two front poses, two side poses, and two back poses. For lifestyle athletes, please send front, back, and side pictures. Additional guidelines can be found on your spreadsheet.





# CHECK INS

- You are also required to submit three video recordings of various exercises from the prior week on check-in days via WhatsApp. It is particularly important to record exercises on which you feel you are struggling. To assist you in recording these videos, you can find reasonably priced smartphone tripods on platforms like Amazon.



## CLOSING MESSAGE

We are deeply honored and thankful that you have chosen us to guide you on this transformative journey. In Team Saga, we're not just a team, but a family. You can trust that we will stand with you at all times, offering you unwavering support and equipping you with the essential tools for success.

The purpose of this handbook is to demystify the complex, streamline your path to achievement, and alleviate any unnecessary overthinking. We hope that the insights you've gained here will serve as invaluable tools that you can utilize throughout your life.

Remember, questions are the pathway to understanding. So, do not hesitate to reach out if you need clarification or if you find these documents useful for ongoing reference throughout your journey.

On behalf of everyone at Team Saga, we extend a heartfelt WELCOME to you!

