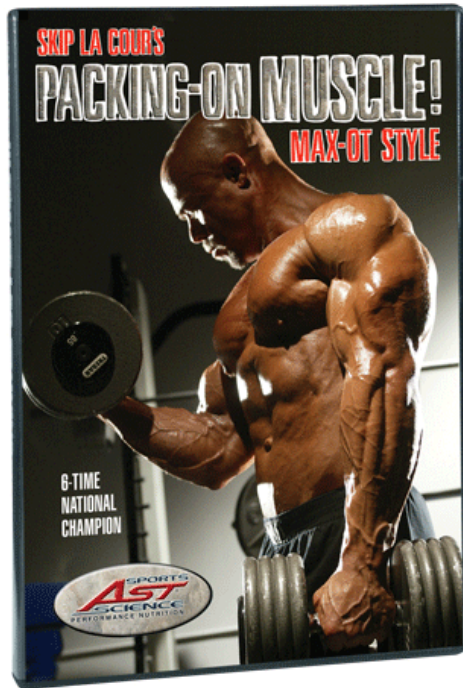


**After setting new and higher standards with this Working Hard Exercise, take your training to the next level with. . .**

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Order online at [www.skiplacour.com](http://www.skiplacour.com). Credit card orders call 1-800-655-0986. Or, send check or money or to: Skip La Cour 712 Bancroft Road #259, Walnut Creek, CA 94598 USA.

**Visit Skip La Cour's website at [www.skiplacour.com](http://www.skiplacour.com)  
TODAY!**

# Skip La Cour's Working Hard Exercise: How Do You Know You Are "Working Hard"?

By Skip La Cour  
Six-Time National Bodybuilding Champion  
[www.skiplacour.com](http://www.skiplacour.com)

Dedicated. Committed. Driven.  
Focused. Disciplined. Determined. This  
is how we often describe the effort we  
put into developing our physiques. In  
other words, we *work hard!*

Are *you* working hard to reach your  
physique-enhancing goals? If you feel  
you are, congratulations! You have  
every right to be proud of what you've  
accomplished. You should feel great  
about the effort you've invested into  
your passion for bodybuilding.

Working hard is very good but are you  
getting the results you feel you  
deserve? When you consider the  
amount of effort you are exerting, are  
you being rewarded accordingly with significant improvements in your physique?

When you don't feel your hard work is paying off, what happens? What do you  
tend to do during those times when you *don't* achieve results equal to all the hard  
work you're putting in? How do you feel?



## *La Cour's Working Hard Exercise: How Do You Know You Are Working Hard?*

Most bodybuilders I talk to feel they are dedicated and committed. If I were to ask 10 guys who are training on a consistent basis “Do you work hard?” I can almost guarantee you *at least* nine of the 10 would emphatically answer “Yes!”

Are all of these bodybuilders *really* working hard like they think they are? Yes—according to what working hard means to them. And, although they describe their efforts the same way, they will all experience different levels of success.

There are many different levels to working hard—and everyone has their own interpretation of what it means to them. Can all nine bodybuilders truly be putting in the same amount of effort? Obviously, the chances are slim they really are.

Here's the challenge: How can you get someone to understand that, regardless of what they think, they actually may not be working hard enough to reach their personal goals? It's an extremely delicate subject to address. No one appreciates being told they are not working hard enough—and will usually do everything they can to discredit the person who tells them so and/or deflect the blame away from themselves. Unfortunately, until a person can come to grips with reality, their chances of success will be limited. They will have a difficult time reaching their full genetic potential and feeling happy with the bodybuilding process.

No one can force you to get the right perspective. Although articles such as this one may be helpful, you must gain an objective and empowering viewpoint for yourself. Ultimately, *you* must be your own quality-control inspector, coach, and motivator. You must take the responsibility of accurately monitoring your own progress—if you wish to be successful in your bodybuilding efforts.

After considering what I've just expressed, let me ask you the same question I asked earlier. Are you working hard to reach your physique-enhancing goals?

How do you know for sure? Do you compare your efforts to those of your peers? How do you define working hard? Is what you are asking yourself going to really take you where you want to go? Are you actually living up to your own requirements for success on a consistent basis?

If you take the time to do the following exercise in its entirety, I am certain you will be able to answer those questions—and a lot more!

## **The “Working Hard” Exercise**

I have discovered a powerful exercise to help you create a clear definition of what working hard means to you. If you can define it for yourself and live up to your own self-imposed, clear, and precise definition, you'll have a better chance of getting results and being happy with your progress.

Take a few minutes to determine the specific actions and steps a person—just like you—must do on a consistent basis in order to achieve three different levels of physique development:

- a pretty darn good physique
- a great physique
- an absolutely amazing physique

This exercise sounds simple—but give a try! Oftentimes, it's the simplest things in life that make the biggest impact.

The specific words you use to describe the three different levels of accomplishment are not important. What is important is that you realize exactly what a person must do—or how hard they must work—to achieve those different levels required varying degrees of effort. A client of mine who I took through the

## *La Cour's Working Hard Exercise: How Do You Know You Are Working Hard?*

process labeled the different levels as “Mr. Pretty Good”; “Mr. Outstanding”; and “Mr. Machine.”

I took myself through this exercise and found it to be extremely enlightening. I sincerely hope it helps you reach your goals. With 12 weeks remaining before my contest and the determination to work hard to become my best, I listed my own standards. I segregated what I felt “working hard” would be to me into three different groups: “To place in the top three”; “To win the national championship”; and “To set a new standard for drug-free bodybuilders who have ever competed in the Team Universe.”

Not only did this exercise make me carefully and consciously outline what working hard at these different levels meant to me, it forced me to reconsider my previous definitions.

The end result was that I immediately raised my standards! Better yet, now that I was conscious of what kind of effort it would take to set a new and higher standard, I instantly began to follow through on many of those “outrageous” demands. I boxed myself in to total commitment—with little or no room for any excuses or rationalization.

## **The Benefits Of Doing The “Working Hard” Exercise**

Here is what this exercise will do for you:

- Forces you to consciously account for everything you are currently doing to meet your personal goals
- Forces you to re-evaluate what you are currently doing to meet your personal goals—and judge their effectiveness and your follow through abilities

## *Skip La Cour*

- Creates a checklist so you can easily monitor your own follow through (or lack of follow through)
- Forces you to take 100 percent responsibility for your actions and realize your destiny is in your control
- Helps you to create more efficient guidelines and standards—which will lead to better improvement in a shorter period of time

### ***You'll Account For Everything You Are Currently Doing To Meet Your Personal Goals***

Honestly assess your current standards. Are they high enough to get where you want to go? The standards you set for yourself will determine what working hard means to you but are your standards high enough for what you want to accomplish? This is the challenge when trying to help someone figure out exactly why they are not progressing at the rate they think they should.

Honestly evaluating your standards is critical to your bodybuilding success! It's important for you to honestly assess your standards before confusion, frustration, and complacency creep into your psyche.

I had a one-on-one phone consultation with a very ambitious bodybuilder and bodybuilding businessman who, just like you and me, believed he was working hard preparing for an upcoming contest. He was experienced, intelligent, and extremely motivated to do what he *thought* he must to place well in his show.

When he outlined exactly what he was doing to prepare for his contest, I immediately noticed he was only doing one session of cardiovascular training every day. Not that I feel it's mandatory to do more than one cardiovascular

session, mind you, but many competitive bodybuilders choose the two-a-day cardio session strategy.

“You know, many bodybuilders do two sessions of cardiovascular when getting in shape for a show,” I said. “Why are you only doing one? What’s your reasoning or strategy for only doing one session a day?”

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**Honestly evaluating your standards is critical to your bodybuilding success! It’s important for you to honestly assess your standards before confusion, frustration, and complacency creep into your psyche.**

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After a few minutes of reflection, he was only doing one because of his extremely demanding business schedule. In addition to getting ready for his own bodybuilding contest, he was helping a couple of other competitors get ready as well. He was simultaneously running his own business, preparing to move the location of that business, and promoting a different upcoming bodybuilding show. Understandably, he simply didn’t feel he had enough time in his day for more cardiovascular training.

Do you think he *thought* he was doing everything he could to become his very best for his show? Yes. Do you think he believed he was working hard? You bet he did! And, yes, he was indeed working hard—according to how he set up what working hard meant to him. He was living up to his own standards.

Were his standards high enough to reach his ambitious goal of placing well in his upcoming national-level contest? After thinking about it, he came to the conclusion he was not working hard enough—at least to meet his contest goal.



He believed that, if he sacrificed some of his business productivity for a period of time, he could have—and should have—been working even harder.

Simply “working hard” to reach your personal bodybuilding goals may not be enough for you do so!

***You Will Be Forced To Re-Evaluate What You Are Currently Doing To Meet Your Personal Goals***

So, you feel you are working hard—but are not achieving the results you feel you deserve? Re-evaluate your standards! Although we may truly feel we are working hard, the standards we set for ourselves will determine the level of success we enjoy. Make sure your standards are demanding enough to get you where you really want to go.

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**The standards we set for ourselves will determine the level of success we will enjoy.**

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*La Cour's Working Hard Exercise: How Do You Know You Are Working Hard?*

### ***You'll Have A Checklist So You Can Easily Monitor Your Progress***

Once you've taken the time to actually write down exactly what you must do to reach your goals, use the three different lists to monitor your level of commitment. Are you *really* doing everything you think you should? Review the three lists often to "anchor in" everything you are doing well. The lists can also serve as a nagging reminder when you are not and step up your efforts.

### ***You Are Forced To Take 100 Percent Responsibility***

Since you are the person who created the definitions and the standards on the three different lists, you have no one to blame but yourself if you don't follow through. Putting the pressure on yourself to follow through is a common quality among all those who are successful.

### ***You'll Create More Efficient Guidelines And Standards***

Chances are you may need to raise your standards and level of commitment after doing this exercise. I know I did! But, although it may be a little bruising to your ego to admit you weren't doing everything you needed to do to reach your goals, your body will benefit in the long run. You'll benefit by producing more impressive improvements.

## **Guidelines To This Exercise**

Here are some important keys to consider while doing this exercise:

- This exercise is based on your own personal goals, needs, desires, priorities, and values. When doing it, take into account your own personal time constraints, physical limitations, and other challenges. You should

## *Skip La Cour*

also factor in your own special genetic gifts, abilities, and advantages many other bodybuilders don't enjoy.

- Create your standards on what it will take to become the very *best* you can be. Be careful not to *underestimate* what you'll need to do to reach your goals. When setting your standards, never *underestimate* what others will do and not do to reach their goals.
- Be very specific about the standards you create.
- Once you've established your new, improved, and higher set of standards, never lower them. If you do, please be honest with yourself and *do not* expect to still achieve the same outstanding results.
- Take responsibility for your success and failure.
- This exercise is based on your current level of knowledge and how well you follow through with what you already know. Using the rationale "I can't start setting higher standards until I learn more!" is not acceptable! You'll see how quickly the knowledge you need comes to you once you are totally committed and have raised your standards.

### ***Your Own Personal Goals, Needs, Desires, Priorities, And Values***

As you go through this exercise, create your standards taking into account your own personal time constraints, physical limitations, and other challenges. You should also factor in your own special genetic gifts, abilities, and advantages many others don't enjoy.

We all want different things from our bodybuilding efforts. Your individual goals, whether they are to become a national bodybuilding champion, enhance your

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performance in the gym, gain a few pounds of muscle, or lose a few pounds of body fat, I believe this mental strategy can work for you. It was certainly an eye-opener for me!

Let me make this perfectly clear: I'm not saying everyone should do whatever it takes to become the next Mr. Olympia. What you want to achieve from your bodybuilding efforts is up to you to decide. Whatever it is you ultimately decide, however, you'll make yourself accountable for your own actions. It doesn't matter what I think you should want or anyone else for that matter. What matters is what *you* think you want.

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**Your individual goals, whether they are to become a national bodybuilding champion, enhance your performance in the gym, gain a few pounds of muscle, or lose a few pounds of body fat, I believe this mental strategy can work for you.**

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### ***Never Overestimate What You'll Need To Do To Reach Your Goals—Or Underestimate What Other People Are Willing To Do To Reach Theirs***

Bill Bradley, former New York Knicks basketball star and New York senator, has a great saying I always try to remember "There is *always* someone somewhere out there working harder than you are!"

Many bodybuilders give themselves too much credit—and their peers too little credit—when it comes to the amount of effort they are exerting into their physique development.

I had a person e-mail me writing, “I don’t know how a drug-free bodybuilder can get as big as you! I’ve made good gains over the years—but not nearly as good as you. I train heavy and I stay within four to six reps—just like you. I’m pretty big, but why aren’t I as big as you?”



I’m sure this guy was working hard—but is he kidding? Are those standards (heavy training and a rep scheme) the only ones he is considering? Does the fact that I eat, sleep, and breathe bodybuilding factor into his equation? How about my history and track record? I’ve focused, prepared for, and entered all seven of the drug-tested NPC Team

Universe contests over the last seven years. The year before that long stretch, I entered the first two Musclemania Natural Bodybuilding Championships. Is length of time at that level of intensity and focus being compared to what he’s done in that time period considered? Despite the fact we both might be working hard, wouldn’t those factors *alone* contribute to a difference in our development?

As I stated before, there are many different levels to working hard and everyone has their own interpretation of what working hard means to them.

Unfortunately, many bodybuilders do not—or choose not to—consider those factors and standards when trying to figure out why they are not progressing the way they feel they should. They are oftentimes too quick to blame circumstances out of their control like genetics and whether those who are better are using steroids and other physique-enhancing drugs. Then, to make matters even

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worse, they choose to spend their time commiserating with other bodybuilders with the same disempowering mindset and fall deeper into the vortex of underachievers.

In my opinion, those assumptions about your lack of genetic quality and better bodybuilders using drugs are too easy to make. Maybe you don't have the greatest genetics of all time—but are they really as bad as you make them out to be? I have no idea what other bodybuilders do behind closed doors, but do you really believe every one of those guys with better physiques are taking drugs? Is it possible their standards are higher than yours?

### ***Be Specific***

Being specific about the standards you establish is a very important aspect to this process. The more specific you are the better!

Setting the standard for doing 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise each day is a good start. However, there is a big difference in the results you'll get if those 30 minutes are spent on a treadmill at a challenging pace as opposed to 30 minutes on a stationary bike. After a month, there will be a massive difference in the results in each of the cardiovascular exercises produces. The person who spends his time on the stationary bike would be foolish to think, "I do just as much cardio as Joe—and I don't look nearly as good as he does! He's just blessed with a fast metabolism and I'm cursed with a slow one!"

I know that example seems obvious, but believe me, I hear the same type of rationale in the other areas of bodybuilding such as training, nutrition, and supplementation from bodybuilders all the time.

Instead of setting the standard of:

## *Skip La Cour*

*I will do 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise five days a week.*

you will get better results by zeroing on the details of that cardiovascular exercise. You may wish to set a higher, more specific standard such as:

*I will do 30 minutes on the treadmill five days a week. All 30 minutes will be at a 2.8 speed or higher and at a 12 percent incline grade. I will not hold onto the handrail at any time during my sessions.*

Does that sound a little *extreme* to you? Well, the person who has earned the physique like the one you ultimately want probably has those type of extreme standards—whether you want to believe that to be true or not.

### ***Once You've Set Your New, Improved, And Higher Standards, Never Lower Them***

If you set your standards and fall short, never lower them. How can you honestly expect to get the same outstanding results and not work as hard? Are you misguided in your rationalization? If you must lower your standards, be realistic! You'll obviously need to lower your expectations as well.

You need to make yourself happy. The best way to do this is by living up to your own, self-imposed, ambitious standards created from a position of strength and optimism—not weakness and pessimism.

### ***Take Responsibility For Your Success And Failure***

Look, you don't want to end up like one of those guys who are always squawking about how great they *could be* if they resorted to taking illegal drugs. You also don't want to end up like those guys who are always sure to tell you they are a

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100-percent, drug-free-for-life, grade-A certified bodybuilder (as if anyone would have a single doubt when they looked at the quality of their physique).

You will never know what it means to really work hard until you actually feel it. You will never actually feel what it means to work hard until you get a clear definition of what that means to you first. After getting clear on your own definition and setting precise standards, your final challenge is to execute. If you execute on a consistent basis, then you have truly worked hard. If you do not, at least you know your destiny was in your own hands.

Maybe, after gaining that perspective, you'll become incredibly determined to live up to the standards you created for yourself. Maybe you'll decide the extra effort isn't worth doing to reach your goals. Whatever you choose to do, you'll be in control of your own success or failure.

As long as you follow through with what you set out to do, you'll feel as though you are working hard.

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**Look, you don't want to end up like one of those guys who are always squawking about how great they *could be* if they resorted to taking illegal drugs. You also don't want to end up like those guys who are always sure to tell you they are a 100-percent, drug-free-for-life, grade-A certified bodybuilder (as if anyone would have a single doubt when they looked at the quality of their physique).**

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***This Exercise Is Based On Your Current Level Of Knowledge***

Whether you've been training for three months, three years, or three decades, this process can help take your physique to the next level. Don't set your standards based on knowledge you haven't acquired yet. Yes, you can always learn more and when you do, you can expect better results. But, never let the excuse of "I'm going to really get serious about doing what I need to do when I get more knowledge." When you begin setting outrageous standards for yourself and really working hard to meet them, you'll be amazed how quickly you'll start gathering information in the areas of training, nutrition, and supplementation.

**Step Up To The Challenge!**

It's my belief the biggest reason why we become frustrated with our lack of progress is because, whether we want to admit it or not, we are not living up to our own standards. Deep inside, we know when we are making the most of the gifts we have and we know when we are making excuses for ourselves. Blaming factors outside our control is just a diversion to take the pressure off of ourselves. If we can convince ourselves, we are not entirely responsible for our less-than-satisfactory results. Unfortunately, we can't fool ourselves for very long. We will eventually realize we let our own selves down. The only problem with learning lessons this way is we waste valuable time. That's time we will *never* get back!

So, why waste time? Let's muster up the courage right here and now. Let's look ourselves in the eye and step up to the challenge. Although it may be painful to admit when we are not working as hard as we once thought we were, we will be the true winners in the end. The pressure we put on ourselves will force us to follow through with the things we say we are willing to do to build great physiques. Now, all we need to do is execute!

**Let's muster up the courage right here and now. Let's look ourselves in the eye and step up to the challenge. Although it may be painful to admit when we are not working as hard as we once thought we were, we will be the true winners in the end.**

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After seeing how this exercise helps you create a better physique, be sure to use it in other areas of your life. The "Working Hard" Exercise can help you improve as a student, businessman, artist, writer—whatever it is in life you are committed to becoming your very best! I'm anxious to hear about your great successes in the future, so be sure to let me know how this exercise has helped you.

And remember, you won't start getting big until you start thinking big!

## About Skip La Cour

Skip La Cour has established himself as a leader in the bodybuilding world with his outstanding physique and by unselfishly communicating his training philosophies to others.

In his passionate effort to propel training, nutrition, supplementation, and mental strategies forward, he has authored nine books, produced five videos, and has frequently contributed to several international magazines. He has accomplished all of this and more while simultaneously becoming one of the world's best drug-free bodybuilders.



## Competitive Bodybuilding Career



Skip La Cour has been training for more than 14 years and has been competing in bodybuilding contests for over 13 years. During that time span, La Cour has competed in 29 bodybuilding show around the world. At 5' 10", La Cour's competition weight ranges from 213 to 230 well-conditioned pounds.

Skip La Cour has won the NPC (National Physique Committee) Team Universe Overall titles twice (in 1998 and 2002). No other man has won the overall title twice. He has won the heavyweight class five different times (1995,

1998, 2000, 2002, and 2003). Those five victories are the most class wins in the

## *La Cour's Working Hard Exercise: How Do You Know You Are Working Hard?*

history of the NPC Team Universe contest. He is also the only man who has competed in all 10 of the NPC's top drug-tested annual amateur event. The contest started back in 1994.

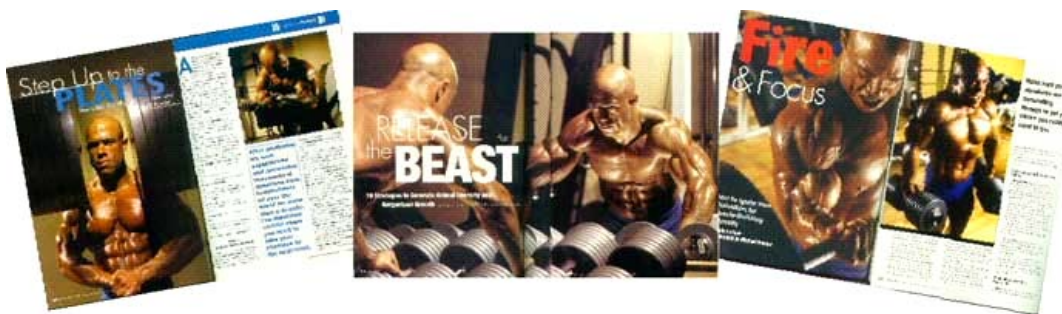
Skip La Cour is also the only man to have ever won the overall titles at both the NPC Team Universe and the Musclemania Natural Bodybuilding Championships—the two most competitive and most recognized drug-tested shows in the United States.

The Academy of Bodybuilding, Fitness and Sports Awards named La Cour “Natural Bodybuilder of the Year” in 1998 for his outstanding efforts.

Drug-free for life, La Cour first appeared on the national scene in 1994, when he won the Musclemania Natural Bodybuilding Championships, which aired on ESPN television. Two years earlier in 1992, he became the first man in the history of the AAU to win the Mr. California and Mr. Natural California in the same year.

### **Featured Magazine Writer**

La Cour is currently a contributing writer for Ironman Magazine. He is also a featured writer *MAX Sports & Fitness*. In addition, he is regular contributor to Natural Muscle, a monthly bodybuilding and fitness magazine.



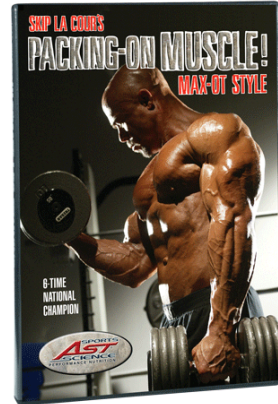
Over the years his work has appeared in MuscleMag International, Muscular Development, Great Lakes Fitness Guide, AST Sports Science's High-

## *Skip La Cour*

Performance Muscle, Steele Jungle and in such international publications as Bodybuilding Monthly Japan, Ironman Japan, and Natural Press in England.

### **La Cour's Books and Videos**

He has accomplished much as a writer, in his books Thinking Big, Thinking Big: The Next Level Workbook, Thinking Big II: Aspiring to a Higher Level of Bodybuilding Achievement!, Skip La Cour's Daily Training Journal, Skip La Cour's Daily Training Journal 2000 and Skip La Cour's Answers The 101+ Most-Often Asked-Questions about Bodybuilding and Training; his special report How I



Packed-On 16 Pounds of Drug-Free Muscle in Just One Year!; and his contributions to several regional, national, and international bodybuilding publications and Internet websites.

His latest contributions to up-and-coming bodybuilders around the world are his hot-selling videotapes Skip La Cour's Mass Machine Hardcore, Skip La Cour's Mass Machine Heavy, and Intense! Training Video, II Training and Instructional Video, Dare To Dream!, Success is a Planned Event: A Day in the Life of Skip La Cour, and Skip La Cour's Live! Bodybuilding and Training Seminar.

### **Business Experience**

Before thrusting his total time, focus, and energy into his passion for bodybuilding and helping others become the best they can be, Skip La Cour worked for the Raley's Superstores for 15 years. He worked from the bottom all the way up to the top, becoming one of the company's youngest store managers at the age of 27.

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La Cour's successes in the business of bodybuilding and fitness include earning multi-year, paid endorsement contracts with large supplement companies such as Met-Rx, TWINLAB, and AST Sports Science, all of which he has earned while still only an amateur bodybuilder. Impressed by La Cour's efforts, Champion Nutrition and Musashi have also supported his efforts in the past by supplying him with free product.

In addition to negotiating those business relationships, he created other opportunities with House of Pain (the workout clothing company), Jan Tana (the tanning supply company), and Jagware (the competition suit maker). He has also starred in national television commercials and currently appears on Anthony Robbins' Personal Power II infomercial.

La Cour lives in Walnut Creek, California (San Francisco Bay Area).

Visit Skip La Cour's Web Site at:

[www.skiplacour.com](http://www.skiplacour.com)

To learn more about AST Sports Science and the

Max-OT Training, visit:

[www.ast-ss.com](http://www.ast-ss.com)