

Anabolic Steroids

By Shannon Patridge for Findthebest.com/Conditions

Introduction: Anabolic steroid abuse is a type of drug abuse prevalent among men wishing to become very muscular. Misusing synthetic steroids has serious side effects and runs a high risk of addiction. Steroids are prohibited in many regions.

Anabolic steroid abuse is misuse of prescription hormone drugs. Most often people abuse steroids for competitive or aesthetic reasons. Anabolic steroids are made up of synthetically created testosterone, the male hormone. Taking steroids can have many side effects including physical changes, emotional changes, and addiction. Anabolic steroids are not to be confused with corticoid steroids, another class of drugs used to treat many disorders including rheumatism and allergic reactions. Taking anabolic steroids reduces body fat and also allows muscles to recover from a strength building workout faster and with greater results. Athletes are most associated with anabolic steroid abuse as it can allow a person to become very muscular and athletic. Other people such as those who struggle with body identity are also at risk for steroid use and addiction, such as young men who are troubled by feelings of weakness or physical inadequacy (body dysmorphia). Anabolic steroids can be taken in a variety of forms. Injecting steroids into muscle tissue with a needle is a very prevalent method. Creams and tablets are also available. Steroid use can bring about some very troubling side effects. Side effects can be reduced by carefully managing quantities and timing of injections. Using steroids long enough for muscle gains but stopping before side effects become severe and then repeating this process is known as “cycling.” A cycle is typically between 6-12 weeks. For professional athletes, taking a break can also be timed in anticipation of testing for performance-enhancing drugs. It is believed using different formulations of anabolic steroids in combination reduces overall side effects. This blend is called a “stacker” and the strategy is known as “stacking”. To use a combination of cycling and stacking together is known as “pyramiding”. There is a taboo surrounding steroid use as it is illegal in many areas and carries with it the stigma of injected drugs. Nonetheless, people are continuing to obtain and abuse anabolic steroids. Side effects of anabolic steroids affect many aspects of wellness. Some serious conditions have been linked to anabolic steroid abuse in both men and women:

- Cancer of the liver or kidneys
- Cardiac events such as stroke or cardiac arrest
- Hypertension
- Blood clots
- Fluid retention
- Elevated blood cholesterol

Hormones effect men and women differently.

Physical effects affecting men:

- Baldness
- Decreased sperm count
- Prostate cancer
- Male breasts
- Infertility
- Shrunken testicles
- Acne
- Gaps in teeth
- Protruding forehead

Physical effects in women:

- Irregular menstruation
- Body hair
- Reduced breast volume
- Deeper voice
- Acne
- Enlarged clitoris
- Hair loss from scalp
- Increased sex drive

Psychological changes occur in steroid abusers.

- Erratic moods
- Aggression
- Manic or elevated behavior
- Hallucinations

Addiction is a very prevalent problem among anabolic steroid users. Once someone becomes very big and strong through steroid-aided workouts, they may be reluctant to stop using and lose the gains. Discontinued use will result in a return to a more natural physique as well as classic withdrawal symptoms:

- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Aches and pains
- Poor concentration
- Anorexia
- Reduced sex drive
- Headaches

Youths taking steroids often experience stunted growth. Hormones affect puberty and body development and can cause premature aging and premature discontinued growth of bones.

Treatment: Seek professional medical care for an anabolic steroid addiction.

See your general practitioner or an addiction specialist if you are struggling with anabolic steroid use. A drug counselor can help you quit using and guide you through the withdrawal process. Counselors also work to help you understand why you began using steroids and how to go on happily and steroid-free.