While anabolic (which means “muscle-building”) steroids can be used to treat some medical conditions, they are often misused by athletes in an attempt to boost performance or improve their physical appearance.

**Misuse of anabolic steroids leads to negative mental effects, such as:**

- Paranoid (extreme, unreasonable) jealousy
- Extreme irritability and aggression (“roid rage”)
- Delusions—false beliefs or ideas
- Impaired judgment
- Shrinking testicles
- Decreased sperm count
- Baldness
- Development of breasts
- Increased risk for prostate cancer
- Stunted growth in teens

Anabolic steroids are very similar to the hormone testosterone. When a man takes steroids, his body thinks he has enough testosterone already, so it stops making its own testosterone. This is an example of a *negative feedback*. The effects of steroids can last for up to a year after a person stops using them.