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Time as a Factor

Time is a necessary factor in any measurement of power – and strength is the ability to produce power; thus time must be considered in measurements of strength – and it must also be considered as one of the most important factors involved in training. If a given training program is performed over a period of two hours, the results will be far different from those that would have been produced if the same program had been performed in one hour.

A trainee should start breathing much more rapidly than he normally does within the first minute of his workouts, and his breathing should not return to normal for at least ten minutes after his workouts have been completed. If not, his training pace is much too slow – and worthwhile results will not be forthcoming as fast as they should be.

Very few bodybuilders are willing to work at such a pace, and as a direct result, many such individuals are actually in rather poor physical condition – in spite of their muscular bulk; most such trainees are under the mistaken impression that fifteen or twenty hours of weekly training are required for building great muscular mass, and they cannot – or will not – work at a fast pace for such long periods. But in fact, a greater degree of results can be produced by only about four hours of weekly training – if such training is conducted at the proper pace.

But, personally, I have about reached a point where I no longer even try to convince bodybuilders of this simple fact; most of them are absolutely – if mistakenly – convinced that nothing less than five or six weekly workouts of three or four hours each will produce much in the way of results. And while such individuals never fail to be literally amazed at the results which we consistently produce from a small fraction of that weekly training time, most of them simply refuse to believe the truth even when it is carefully explained to them.

Personally – if twenty hours of hard weekly training were required for the production of the best results – I would consider any possible results badly overpriced, and simply not worth the cost; but in fact, such prolonged training will actually retard progress – rather than promoting it.

The weight of all available evidence clearly proves that the best results will always be produced by less than five hours of weekly training – and in most cases, by less than four hours of weekly training; but such training must be intense, and fast paced. The only allowable periods of rest during a workout should occur between the performances of consecutive sets of the same exercise – and if the workout is properly outlined, even those rest periods can be avoided in many cases, and should be avoided whenever possible.

Nor is this merely a matter of saving time – in fact, the saving of training time is the least important consideration; for building overall condition – improving the heart action, breathing, circulation, and muscular endurance – a fast pace of training is an absolute requirement. If exactly the same training program is performed in twice the proper amount of time, then some – but not much – muscle growth stimulation will be induced, but practically nothing in the way of improved condition will result. The muscles will grow – very slowly – but breathing, the heart action, the circulation, and endurance will remain almost unchanged. And while several years of such training can – and probably will – produce a great degree of muscular size, such an individual would probably be in very poor physical condition.

The Arthur Jones Collection

Far faster muscular growth – and simply enormous improvements in condition – could have been produced, and would have been produced, by performing exactly the same training program in half the time.

Obviously, there is a limit to the speed of training; since it is impossible to perform a second set of an exercise immediately following a first set of maximum-possible intensity. But a properly conditioned individual should be able to perform a second set of an exercise within a period of four minutes following the start of the first set – and a third set four minutes later; and his performance should increase set by set – he should perform better in the second set than he did in the first set, and even better during the third set.

In many cases, it is possible to alternate exercises between various body parts – and in this way rest periods can be almost entirely eliminated; in some cases, this type of training is an absolute requirement for the production of best results – this being true in regard to the chest, the lower legs, and the forearms. No other type of training for those body parts will produce anything even approaching maximum possible results –regardless of how long such training may be continued.

The largest muscles of the upper body should be exercised immediately after a set of heavy exercise for the thighs – while the rate of breathing is still very high; with no slightest rest between the leg work and the upper body movements. The calves and forearms should be exercised without rest for a period of several minutes – as soon as a set of one exercise is completed, a set of another exercise for the same body part should be started. And every set of every exercise should be carried to the point of absolute – if momentary – muscular failure.

In later chapters devoted to exact training routines, a time factor will always be included as an essential part of each training program, and close attention should be given to this factor; if it is not, then results will be far below what they should be.