

# **Nautilus Bulletin #1**

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## The Significance of Measurements

So many outright lies have been stated on the subject of bodily measurements during the last few years that I am almost tempted to skip the subject entirely – and I would do so except for the fact that a few points should be established in this regard.

But before I do so, I want to say that the largest muscular upper arm that I ever measured – and certainly one of the largest muscular arms in the world – was the left arm of Bill Pearl; which was 18-5/8 inches measured "cold" and perfectly accurately. Yet many bodybuilders – with arms that are obviously much smaller than Bill Pearl's – claim upper arm measurements of as much as 23 inches; and 19 inch upper arms – if you are to believe current claims – are almost as common as dirt.

The size of the average man's head is between 22 and 23 inches, and I have yet to see a man with muscular arms that even began to approach the size of his head – nor do I ever expect to. But I mention the size of the head in relation to the size of the arms very pointedly – because the apparent size of an individual will depend to a great degree upon the size of his head, and this is especially true when you must judge a man's size by photographs; a man with a larger than average head will always look far smaller than his actual size, and vice versa.

But quite contrary to very common belief, photographs do not make an individual look "heavier" than he or she actually may be; in fact, if any apparent distortion of size is created, the photographed individual will almost always look much smaller than true size. This is especially true when you are dealing with photographs of athletes with great muscular size –while such an individual may appear quite large in a photograph, if so, then he will usually appear to be almost a giant in person.

It seems to be almost literally impossible to photograph a very heavily developed bodybuilder in such a manner that a true impression of his size is given – while such an individual may be very impressive in photographs, he will be almost unbelievable in person. And this is especially true when the accurate height and bodyweight of an individual are given in connection with a photograph.

But in spite of their almost unbelievable muscular size, the actual measurements of such individuals will seldom even closely approach those quoted for them – or by them. On a man of average height, a 16 inch muscular arm is very impressive – a 17 inch upper arm is so large that it may make the individual appear freakish if the rest of the body's muscular proportion is not in proportion – an 18 inch upper must be seen to be appreciated – and a 19 inch upper arm approaches the impossible insofar as size is concerned. True – I once saw a man with upper arms that were over 20 inches in reasonable muscular condition; but he wasn't an average individual – he was just under a full nine feet tall and weighed over 500 pounds.

If such a man weighed as much as he should in order to present a reasonably proportioned appearance, his upper arms might measure as much as 25 inches – but he would have to weigh something on the order of 800 pounds to retain such reasonable proportions at that height.

## The Arthur Jones Collection

And that is my entire point, measurements should be in proportion to the height and weight of the individual – totally without regard for what their actual size may be; if not, then an individual will present a freakish appearance. But in fact, some bodybuilders go to great lengths in their attempts to create just such a freakish appearance; some years ago, in northern California, it was quite the "thing" for heavily developed bodybuilders to wear as many as seven carefully tailored, very thick sweaters – merely in an attempt to overstate their already enormous size.

But if clothes are properly cut and fitted, then even the largest bodybuilder can pass through a crowd unnoticed; fairly recently, in New York, my son was waiting in the lobby of a well lighted building when one of the heaviest developed individuals in the history of the world walked by him at a distance of five feet, completely unnoticed – even though my son knew the man, was expecting him, and was looking for him. In well fitted clothing he simply did not stand out, in spite of his literally enormous size.

Then, a few minutes later, another – but much smaller – bodybuilder entered the same lobby, and all eyes were immediately turned in his direction; he appeared enormous – and he also appeared to have escaped from the set of a Frankenstein movie, still in costume as the monster. All he really required in that direction was a bolt through his neck – he already had on a hair coat. Yet such an outrageous appearance was a total creation of his selected costume; and this was clearly proven by the fact that the other, actually much larger, bodybuilder passed unnoticed.

If it appears that the author looks with disfavor upon the antics of such people as the Frankenstein-like character mentioned above, then the reader has gained the proper impression; but while the opinions of the author are of very little importance to anyone apart from himself, the actions of such characters are of great – if totally negative – importance. Because many people judge the entire field of weight-training by such individuals.

And while it has taken the commercial airlines a great number of years to live down the reputation established by the early day barnstorming pilots –without which there would probably never have been any airlines – it now appears that the field of weight training may be forced to go through an even more prolonged period of living down the antics of some bodybuilders, without which the field of weight training could do quite well.

Apart from considerations which will be carefully explained in a later chapter dealing with charting progress, the coach I charge of a class of weight trainees would probably be well advised to do everything possible in the direction of discouraging interest in measurements; too closely watched by an individual trainee, the normal fluctuations in bodily measurements can lead to great discouragement.

If at all possible, it is usually far better to try to concentrate the trainee's entire attention on attempts to better his performances, and if this is done properly, then the matter of measurements will take care of itself quite nicely – when the subject can curl 200 pounds in good form without body-swing, then his arms will be as large as they need to be for any possible purpose connected with any sport just short of wrestling bears.