

# Nautilus Bulletin #2

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## A Few Simple Facts

The truth of the matter is that almost every single point of required information on the subject of weight-training is contained in the preceding five brief chapters; now I must make at least some attempt to justify those points – and take a stab in the direction of trying to explain such things as the required "form" (or style of performance) of the most important exercises.

The average trainee would be well advised to keep it clearly in mind that it really doesn't matter "why" certain exercises work – so long as it is understood that they do work, and so long as the proper form is understood; unfortunately for their own interests, most experienced trainees are unwilling to accept simple statements of fact – and if they cannot at least convince themselves that they do understand the reasons that exercises produce certain results (or fail to produce them), the tendency is to reject these exercises in favor of others that they feel they do understand. Which attitude is understandable – perhaps even unavoidably natural – but nevertheless unfortunate.

Unfortunate because such an attitude prevents many people from making good use of things that simply can't be satisfactorily explained. I am reasonably certain that such thinking limits all of us to a greater or lesser degrees, and I certainly do not wish to imply that my own thinking is not so limited – on the contrary, I am quite sure that it is; however, in my own case, I have at least been well aware of this factor for many years, and have tried to be on guard against its possible adverse effects. Twenty years ago, I was handling poisonous snakes in large numbers – literally by the tens-of-thousands – and I eventually developed a style of handling them which appeared (to other people) to border on outright insanity; this method was based on a clear awareness (on my part) that I could literally "read a snake's mind." In effect, I knew what a snake was going to do – well in advance of the action; but while I was absolutely certain of the accuracy of this knowledge, I had no slightest idea of "how" I knew it. I could not even explain this ability to myself, let alone to the satisfaction of somebody else.

Now – twenty years and approximately half a million snakes later – I do understand this ability, and I can clearly explain it to almost anybody; I say "almost" anybody with good cause – because some people are so afraid of snakes that they are literally incapable of rational thought on the subject of snakes. And it is of no small concern to any would-be weight trainee to be aware of the fact that many bodybuilders have a very similar attitude on the subject of exercise and-or diet; having been brainwashed for years, such people are no longer capable of rational thought in this field.

Getting back to the mention of snakes for a moment –because the example is the only one I can think of to parallel a very similar situation in the field of exercise; for a period of at least several years, I was making good practical use of observations of fact – but these observations were entirely on the subconscious level. Snakes clearly "telegraph their punches" – in a manner that is unavoidably obvious, once it has been called to your attention; a rattlesnake does so with its tongue, a chicken snake with its upper lip, a boa constrictor with its neck – and once you know what to look for, almost anybody can handle any of these types of snakes with literally no danger of being bitten. Handle them with their bare hands, I mean.

I can easily demonstrate the validity of these observations to anybody that isn't simply terrified of snakes – but I made good practical use of this knowledge long before I was even aware that I possessed it; I simply "knew" that a particular snake would not bite me – and if the snake changed its intentions, I was instantly aware of the fact, far enough in advance of any action on the snake's part to avoid being bitten.

## The Arthur Jones Collection

In a similar vein, but in the field of weight-training, I have long been aware of certain things without clearly understanding "how" I was aware of them – I knew that most barbell exercises weren't quite "right" when I first started using barbells, but it took me over twenty years to explain these shortcomings even to my own satisfaction; and some of the things that were obvious to me as much as thirty years ago have become clear to me only during the last year or two.

It is my firmly-held personal opinion that most bodybuilders keep changing their training schedules primarily because of similar feelings of doubt –apparently they "sense that something is wrong" but can't quite put their finger on the problem; so they keep altering their schedules in an attempt to find exercises, or an order of exercises, that "feels right to them."

Eventually, I realized that most of these problems arise from the simple fact that the situation has been approached from the wrong direction – from a direction exactly opposite to that which is really required; many people – including myself – devoted years to attempts to accommodate the available tools. Rather than trying to devise exercises that were suitable for the muscles involved, practically all of the attention was devoted to attempts to "satisfy" a barbell.

Now – and make no slightest mistake about this point; a barbell is an extremely productive tool for the purpose of building strength and muscular size – a far more productive tool than even most bodybuilders realize. But its advantages must be clearly understood – and its shortcomings must be allowed for.

The barbell is almost literally "the perfect tool" for many purposes – but it is useless for some other purposes; some barbell exercises are extremely productive – some others are an outright waste of time and effort. Several dozen people have been after me for a period of at least two years in concentrated efforts to get me to design and build a Calf Machine – but I have simply refused to do so; because no such machine is required – a block of wood to stand on, a heavy dumbbell, and something to hold on to and you are in business, so why do you need a complicated calf machine that cannot do the job any better?

My only real concern is attempting to improve the production of results from weight-training – and in that direction, if new tools are required, then I am prepared to design and build anything that may be an actual requirement, or even a tool that will merely improve the degree of possible results or make worthwhile contributions to better rates-of-progress; but I am not prepared to waste my time in efforts to design or build machines that are not required. At the moment, there is a pile of junked research machines stacked up behind my prototype shop that is literally as big as a house, but every single one of those machines was an effort in the direction of providing an actually-required tool; none of our machines duplicate – or even imitate – barbell exercises. Instead they provide exercise movements that are literally impossible with a barbell – they make it possible for you to actually do what you have been trying to do with a barbell.

But in many cases you actually can do what you are trying to do with a barbell – and in such cases, no other tool is required; and many other cases, you can come so close to doing what you are trying to do that no other tool is justified – in effect, any degree of improvement provided by an improved tool would not be justified on the grounds of expense (or other considerations).

For the average trainee, actually-proper use of a barbell is NOT complicated; in fact, if anything, it may actually be far too simple. In later chapters I will at least attempt explanations of the following and many other related points, but if the points listed below are clearly understood and practiced then any trainee will be moving in the direction of producing best-possible results.

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1. Limit your weekly workouts to three training sessions for the entire body – including the legs.
2. Limit the length of your workouts to a total of not more than two hours each – a weekly total training time of six hours; and in almost all cases, even better results will be produced by a total weekly training time of less than four hours – or even as little as two hours.
3. Seldom perform more than two sets of any one exercise – and NEVER perform more than three sets of any one exercise.
4. Make unceasing efforts to progress – always attempt to produce at least some sign of progress in every set of every exercise.
5. Pay particular attention to the "form" of your exercises – do not permit the style of performance to degenerate into a mere "going through the motions."
6. In general, select the "hardest" exercises – and perform them in the hardest manner possible; if a particular style of performance makes an exercise easier, then it almost always makes it less productive.
7. NEVER terminate a particular set simply because you have completed a certain number of repetitions; a set is properly finished only when additional movement is utterly impossible – curl until you can't even begin to bend your arms, squat until you can't start up from the low position, press until you cannot move the bar away from your shoulders or your chest.
8. If you can perform your "guide number" of repetitions – or MORE –then that is your signal to increase the resistance in that particular exercise at the time of your next workout.
9. Judge your progress by measurable strength increases; when you can perform the same number of repetitions with twice as much resistance, then your muscles will be at least twice as big as they were at the start – and probably more than twice as big.
10. An advanced trainee does NOT need "more" exercise than a beginner; he simply needs "harder" exercise, in direct proportion to the differential in strength. An advanced man may be able to "stand" more exercise – but it is not a requirement, and will almost always quickly lead to a situation where additional progress comes to a halt, or slows to a snail's pace.
11. An intelligently selected, reasonably balanced diet is all that is required – and you MUST have both carbohydrates and fats; the amount of food is of more importance than any other factor of diet – if the diet is well rounded. If you are adding fat, then you are eating too much – too many calories; if you are losing weight, then you are not eating enough. It is really just that simple. Any number of freely available government publications contain all of the required information on the subject of diet. And while you may or may not agree with the government's policy on Vietnam, you should at least realize that the government has no axes to grind on the subject of diet; if and when the government starts selling health foods, then look out – but in the meantime, you can take their word on this subject at least.
12. Do not make any attempt to compare yourself with any other individual – unless you happen to have an identical twin, and there are some physical differences even then; far too many factors are involved to make it possible to compare individuals on a rational basis.

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13. Building maximum-possible degrees of strength in all of the major muscular structures of the body will also unavoidably produce maximum-possible degrees of muscular size; so work to increase your strength – and control your degree of existing muscularity by regulating the amount of your diet.
14. "Spot reductions" of fatty tissue is an outright myth – a physical impossibility. Build the muscles of your abdominal area by training them in exactly the same way you exercise your other muscles, two or three sets of from six to twenty repetitions, repeated three times weekly; get rid of any fat in that area by simply reducing your intake of food – or by increasing the "amount" of overall exercises.  
  
But NOT by increasing the amount of abdominal exercise. In effect – and IN FACT – you can reduce fatty tissue in the area of your waist by working your legs (or your arms, or your shoulders, or any other muscle group in your body), it is NOT necessary to work the midsection in order to reduce fat in the midsection; and ABSOLUTELY NOTHING in the way of an artificial aid will do anything in the way of helping the situation – all that matters is overall consumption of calories, energy; output-food input.
15. Do NOT make the mistake of trying to add muscular size by "bulking up" – adding fatty tissue; such fatty tissue is not muscle and cannot become muscle – and newly-added fat cells, once added, can be completely removed only by surgery. You can reduce the size of fat cells, but you cannot entirely remove the cell itself – and unlike muscle fibers, fat cells CAN BE INCREASED IN NUMBER.
16. Avoid so-called "growth drugs" like the plague.
17. Have confidence in your training; if you are too sick to make muscular gains you should be in the hospital – ANY healthy individual can do so.

The rest is explanation – or justification; or explanation of required form.